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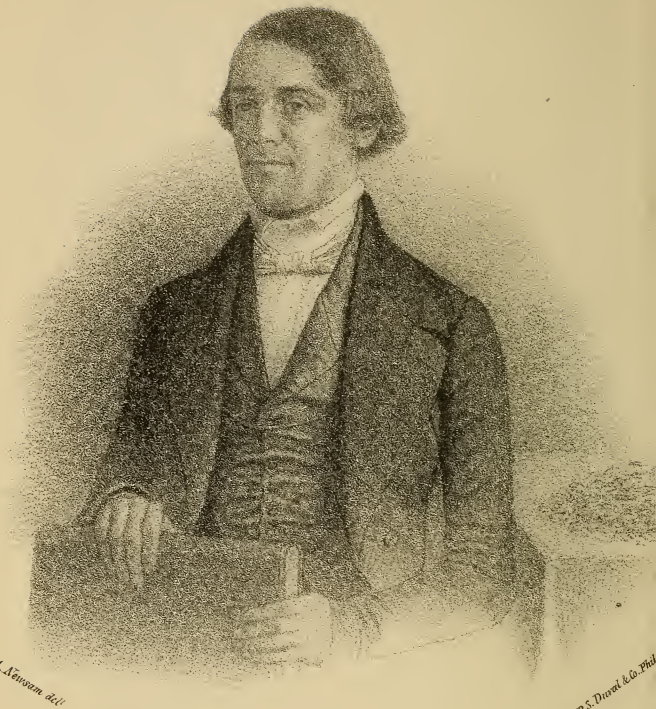

Yours Truly in the Gospel
C. I. P. Messinger

MEMOIR

OF

Rev. Erasmus J. P. Messinger,

MISSIONARY OF THE PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN AFRICA.

BY

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THE BIRTH PLACE

MEMOIR.

CHAPTER I.

EARLY LIFE AND OCCUPATION.

James Messinger, as he was always called, was the eldest son of Horace and Olive Messinger, of Wrentham, Massachusetts. He was born June 28, 1811. His parents were in respectable circumstances but with a small amount of earthly wealth, and his early days were not passed in luxury, though with sufficient comforts for his own advantage. He had not that precious privilege either, which so many others have enjoyed, of parental piety. Neither of his parents at the time of his birth was a professed member of the church of Christ. He was thus deprived of a blessing which it is impossible to value too highly. To have been the child of those who have loved and worshipped

God, and whose personal piety has been the guide and the bright example for their offspring, is certainly one of the most precious blessings in the life of man. To neglect or abuse such a privilege as this, must always make our responsibility and our guilt exceeding great. Sad is the condition of those who were the children of parental faith and prayer, and yet have themselves rejected the blessed hope of the gospel which was so faithfully set before them. Many who have never enjoyed such means of heavenly benefit will rise up in the judgment with them to condemn them. With far less advantages, they have found and received a kingdom which these, with such precious opportunities, have still despised and lost.

This great privilege was not given to James Messinger. His parents endeavoured to instil into their children's minds the purest principles of morality. They taught them to discharge uprightly and faithfully the duties of their present earthly relations. But they did not lead them in the way everlasting, or bring them in prayer and instruction to the Saviour's feet. In their efforts to educate their children according to

their own knowledge of that which was right, they succeeded so far that their household was restrained from outward and gross sins. And this outward good conduct was an advantage to be remembered with gratitude. But God was very gracious to this family in subsequent years. Others of them, beside the subject of this memoir, were brought by the Holy Spirit to a knowledge of the Saviour's truth and to an enjoyment of his favour. The Lord was pleased to choose them for his own, and to guide their feet into his ways of peace and holiness, though they had not been early taught his grace and love to the little ones whom he has redeemed. In this he displayed the riches of his grace, for which they had reason to praise him with thankful hearts. Yet we must never forget to prize that early Christian training which may lead a youth, like Timothy, to give his heart to the Lord, and to love those Holy Scriptures which God hath given to make him wise unto salvation from his earliest days.

The childhood and youth of James Messinger were not particularly marked by any unusual events. He was an amiable, quiet

boy, gentle and cheerful in his disposition, never rude or boisterous. He seldom joined in the rough plays of his companions. He was very fond of books, and preferred the society of his mother and sisters to that of boys of his own age. His mother, who survived him, and who became a professed Christian after he had left her habitation, says of him, that his general deportment, even in his earliest childhood, was so correct, that he seldom needed correction of any kind. He was addicted to no youthful vice. He maintained a strict regard for truth, and was never known to tell a falsehood even to screen himself from censure.

At a subsequent period of his life, when reviewing his own youthful days, he says of himself: "In looking back over my past life, I think I can see the hand of God very evidently. During my younger days, although wicked enough, no doubt, I was kept from falling into most of the grosser forms of sin. Swearing, in particular,—a habit so prevalent among boys at that time,—I never indulged in, except for one short period, when I was led away by the example of an older boy who was awfully addicted to

it. I was diffident about it at first. But I soon got over that, and could utter an oath freely. By the faithful counsels of a friend, however, I left it off before it had gained so strong a hold as to become a habit."

He early manifested a taste for music and for drawing. His little room was decorated with the productions of his own pencil. For a long time several little books were preserved in the family, which he and a cousin of his own age had filled with fancy sketches and landscapes of their own drawing. These little productions exhibited unusual accuracy and skill, although he had never received any instruction in the art. To gratify his taste for music, his mother purchased a flute for him, and on this he learned to play with but little instruction from others. These recreations became sources of much pleasure and usefulness to him in his subsequent life. He delighted so much in music that he afterwards had many doubts whether he ought not to abandon it entirely, as an amusement too absorbing and unprofitable.

His fondness for books led him to pass much of his leisure time in reading. The

circumstances of his family required all of its members to fulfil some part of the daily work of the household. But, though he was never unwilling to do what was required of him, he would sometimes allow his brother to perform his little required task of out-door labour, that he might remain unmolested with his books. In his reading he had a useful taste. He took no pleasure in novels or fictitious stories, but he particularly delighted in biographies, travels, and histories. Before he was fourteen years old he had read several large volumes of history, both ancient and modern, and a number of works of general literature. He was sent to school when he was quite young, and he progressed with much rapidity in his studies. He was so docile, obedient, quick of apprehension, and so persevering, that it was a pleasure to others to teach him. He was never willing to leave any of his subjects of study until he thoroughly understood them. Thus he made the most of his limited opportunities; and, though he had no advantages but those of a common country school, he gained far more than boys usually do by his faithful im-

provement of all the means of learning within his reach.

After the death of his father, a gentleman, under whose instruction James had been for a single term, became so much interested in his character and progress that he expressed a great desire for his complete education. But the accomplishment of this seemed impossible until another friend, who felt a strong interest in him and his family, offered to defray the expense of his further education for a longer period than any means in their power would allow. He was then sent to an academy in Wrentham, where he remained at school until he removed to Philadelphia.

Thus his early years passed by, in quietness and seclusion, and in the diligent fulfilment of his youthful duties. There is little that is romantic or striking in the youthful progress of such a boy, but it is the surest education for future usefulness. There are no traits of character in a boy more promising than the patient, cheerful, assiduous performance of the regular though retired duties of his youth, and a faithful attention to the claims of his own

family and home. In such a youthful life every virtue is nourished and growing for the future work and cares of earth, in any station of life to which God shall be pleased to call the man. Its course may seem less exciting as it passes, but it is far more valuable and important in its results.

When James was ten years old, his father was suddenly removed by death. His mother was then left to provide for her own little family, of whom the youngest was an infant of a few weeks old, and also for the aged mother of her husband. This was a weary and toilsome task to a widowed mother. Neither of her sons were old enough to render her any assistance in the work of her little farm, and the slender income arising from it would not warrant the expense of hiring needful labour. She was obliged, therefore, to leave it to others, and her whole support for her fatherless family was the small rent which she received and the avails of her own industry. Yet even with this she was able to send her children to school, and to give them all the advantages for education which their retired dwelling allowed.

These were the circumstances which particularly brought out the tenderness and loveliness of James's character. During these first years of his mother's widowhood he was her chief solace and comfort. All that he could do to relieve her burdens became his delight. Though but a child, he was ready to make every sacrifice to promote her comfort and happiness and to gratify and console his aged grandmother. Attention to his mother's wants from this time directed all his plans of life. Her interests and welfare were a part of his constant thoughts and care. It seemed to be his highest earthly delight to increase her happiness and to relieve her trials. He never forgot his mother. He might be truly called THE BOY WHO ALWAYS LOVED HIS MOTHER. It was a beautiful trait of character. And God blessed him afterwards abundantly for it in his own character and life. After he had gone from his native home to enter upon the business of life, this trait in his character was still very constant and very remarkable. At a subsequent period, when his younger brother was about leaving

home to learn a trade, James wrote to him upon the same subject:—

"Mother informs me that you intend learning a trade. I am very glad of it, because I know that it will be advantageous to you. But before you leave home I hope you will endeavour to leave our dear mother and grandmother and the rest of the family as comfortable as possible. The desire of mother that I should come home, and in some measure supply your place, I should not hesitate to comply with, had I not been strongly impressed with the idea that I could render more substantial help by remaining here than by coming home. But I hope before you leave home you will do every thing you can for mother, and, should you be near home, that you will often visit them, and afford them all the assistance in your power. You know, dear brother, that mother has had many hardships for our sakes. Well do I remember how she used to go out in cold stormy weather to assist us about our work, in order to afford us the opportunity of attending school. May we live to enjoy the pleasure of having it in our power to return in some

small degree the debt we owe her, by contributing to her comfort in the decline of life!"

Then, again, he wrote to his sister, referring to his brother's absence:—

"I scarcely know how you will get along without him, as mother wrote me he was going to learn a trade this fall. You must try to do all you can to help along. Think how much trouble and hardship mother has undergone for our sakes. Surely we are old enough to take some of the burden off her hands. I hope you will not neglect these hints. Never suffer mother to undergo any hardships of which you can relieve her. Strive to do all you can to lessen the cares and anxieties which must of necessity come upon her. Be kind, obedient, and cheerful in the performance of every duty. Consider it a pleasure to do any thing by which you can render assistance to her."

To another sister he wrote:—

"I hope you will do all you can to contribute to the assistance and comfort of grandmother and mother. You have it in your power to do much for them. Take

care that you never grieve them by folly or misconduct. If my influence will have any effect on your mind, think how much your brother wishes you to behave well and to render yourself useful and beloved; but remember, above all, that God always sees you, and that you never can be guilty of a fault that is not known to him. Strive, then, to be dutiful and obedient to our only remaining parent, and to be kind and affectionate to all around you."

These are beautiful exhibitions of his filial love. A remembrance of his mother's wants and sorrows was a constantly governing principle in his youthful heart. It was a spirit which never forsook him in his whole subsequent life. Even while on his bed of death in Africa, his heart still yearned over the sorrows and cares of his widowed mother. There he gave directions for the sale of his little earthly property, that the avails of it might be sent back to America to his mother. Though the sum was small, it was enough to contribute much to her comfort for her remaining years. How precious is such a recollection of a boy who never forgot and never ceased to love his

mother! What a beauty does this trait add to the character and conduct of a youth! It gives also an influence, refining and exalting, to the whole of subsequent life. I know not how we could have a more valuable tribute given to the memory of a young servant of the Lord, in all his earthly relations, than "HE WAS A BOY WHO NEVER FORGOT HIS MOTHER."

CHAPTER II.

REMOVAL TO PHILADELPHIA.

In the year 1826, when James was fifteen years old, an uncle who lived in Philadelphia, an umbrella-maker in very extensive business, offered to take him and teach him his trade, and then to establish him in the business if he desired to follow it. He was at that time at the academy in Wrentham, his native place, supported by the kindness of a friend. But the offer appeared to be so advantageous to him, in reference to his future prospects in life, that his mother consented to part with him and to allow him to accept it. Her own income was very small, and it was necessary for James to earn his own living. This was a great trial to him. He was thus sent away, from the quietness and retirement of his native rural home, to the new and untried scenes of a large city, where temptations to evil would surround him on every side and

snares would be spread for him in every path in which he should go. How many precious youths fall a final prey to such an influence! How gracious was that divine power which guarded and preserved him! We shall find that, like Joseph, "the Lord was with him" in all his future ways, and brought him at last to the work to which he had called him, though that work was so short upon the earth.

He remained in this situation in his uncle's establishment until he was twenty-one years old. But he did not find the employment agreeable, and was unwilling to adopt it as a business for life. He was exceedingly anxious to obtain a thorough education. He constantly looked forward to some employment which might furnish him better means and opportunity for the exercise and improvement of his mind. He was so closely confined, during the years of his apprenticeship, to his appointed work, that he had but little opportunity for study. Much that he had previously learned was necessarily forgotten; and he grieved over what appeared to him the waste of his time and of his powers for intellectual attain-

ment and usefulness. About the close of his term of engagement in his uncle's business, he described his desire and plan for future life in a letter to his aunt. He had expressed his exceeding desire to pursue a full course of studies for some literary employment. His aunt urged him to enter upon such a course of study with a view to the ministry of the gospel. In reply to this suggestion, he wrote:—

"I received your letter a short time since, but for want of time have not been able to answer it until now. The subject which you urge upon my consideration I feel to be a very important one. I am not, and hope I never shall be, insensible to the claims of the perishing world on those who love the Lord Jesus Christ. I cannot think that it is the duty of every young man who feels the love of God shed abroad in his heart, to thrust himself into the ministry, as if that were the only way in which he could promote the cause of his Lord and master. Nevertheless, if his circumstances are favourable, he ought seriously to consider whether he cannot do more for the cause of Christ in that way than in any

other. His language should be, 'Here, Lord, am I; what wilt thou have me to do?' I do sometimes feel as if I should like to proclaim to sinners the everlasting gospel, but I cannot feel warranted to fix my views decidedly upon it. Should I ever enter the ministry, I should prefer to work my way thither by my own exertions rather than to draw upon the kindness of my friends. One great, and, in fact, the greatest, obstacle in my way, in taking the course which you advise, is the claims which the pecuniary circumstances of my mother have to my consideration. This I only hinted at in my letter to her. I know that she would urge me not to let such a consideration deter me; but this would not satisfy me. Nor can I feel myself at liberty to relinquish all pecuniary pursuits while I know not what will be her situation and wants when grandmother is no more. To have it in my power to render some assistance, if needed, is what I hope and strive for. And this, together with some information that I have received from my relatives here in regard to pecuniary assistance, have induced me to remain with them another year, at which time

uncle contemplates retiring from the active part of the business. Matters will then probably arrive at such a crisis, as to enable me to decide as to my future course. I have not, at present, any idea of devoting my life to the business in which I am now engaged. My ultimate object is to prepare myself for teaching. While I am engaged in that occupation I shall have considerable time for study. And thus I can fit myself for higher pursuits, should I ever feel called upon to engage in them. These are my present views in regard to my future course; I know not what may take place to change them. The Lord seeth not as man seeth. Should he open another path before me, and seem to say, by the voice of his providence, 'This is the way, walk in it,' I should feel myself called upon to act differently from what I now intend."

The character of this letter displays the religious aspect of his mind and feelings in advance of the narrative which we have given of his actual course. It is intended here simply to display his feelings and views in reference to his choice of employment for himself for his mature life. Though

he felt no satisfaction in the occupation in which his apprenticeship was passed, he faithfully fulfilled its duties till the expiration of his appointed time. In the mean time many of his friends became acquainted with his desire for study, and God was pleased to open before him the way in which he might engage in it.

He remained in his uncle's employment until 1833. Then Mr. J. H. Brown, a highly respectable teacher in Philadelphia, offered him a situation as an assistant teacher in his school. Here he could pursue such studies as he desired, and, at the same time, be employed in a line of duty which was altogether in accordance with habits of study. He, therefore, gladly embraced the opening which was thus made for him, though for the present he also still assisted his uncle, a part of each day, in his store. Now his occupation became professedly that of a teacher. He was thus employed with Mr. Brown, and subsequently with Mr. T. James, who was also a teacher in that city. During a few succeeding years, his time was all occupied in the twofold effort to acquire and to impart instruction, until

he was induced to devote his whole time to the preparatory studies for the gospel ministry. He was thus constantly improving his mind, and obtaining new and important experience for the great work upon which at last he was permitted to enter, but so small a part of the duties of which he was allowed to perform. We pass over this intervening period so cursorily now, because, in succeeding chapters, we must enter more particularly into its current of events as they passed. Our Heavenly Father has a variety of ways for preparing labourers for the harvest of his glorious gospel; and he himself fixes the time and the place of their labours in his service.

CHAPTER III.

EARLY RELIGIOUS CHARACTER.

In a life like Mr. Messinger's, it is interesting to inquire for the first indications of the work of the Holy Spirit in leading him to the Saviour's service. We know, however, but very little of the state of his youthful mind upon the great interests of the gospel and the welfare of his own soul. Before he made an open profession of his love for the Lord his Saviour, he wrote some letters to his mother, giving her an account of his feelings and views. But these letters have been lost, and we feel it to be a great loss in this particular connection. He was always distinguished by a serious and thoughtful turn of mind. His aged grandmother used to call her little group of grandchildren around her when he was a boy at home, and instruct them in the word of God. These instructions had a good effect on his mind to restrain him from out-

ward wickedness and to lead him to a very sincere reverence for religious character and for the truths of the gospel. But he does not appear to have had at that time any real convictions of the evil of sin, or of the necessity of a renewal of his heart and nature by the Holy Spirit.

After his decease, a partial sketch was found among his papers, furnishing a general but brief account of his feelings upon the great interests of personal religion previous to his actual conversion. In this fragment he says:—

"Although I cannot say my education was decidedly religious, yet I always entertained a feeling of high respect for religion. I think I can trace back these impressions as far as I can recollect any thing concerning myself. I considered religion important and calculated to make me happy. But I never formed the serious resolution of becoming religious myself. I thought, perhaps, I should at some future time. But I was young, and none of my companions seemed to give any attention to their eternal interests, and I thought I might enjoy myself with them now, and when I became

too old to play with them I would become a Christian. This was pretty much the form of reasoning used in my heart, and which served to satisfy conscience at that time.

"During the winter of 1828–29, after my removal to Philadelphia, I was more strongly impressed than at any previous time. I felt the importance of religion, and thought seriously of yielding my heart to its claims. But the fear of the world, the lust of the flesh, and the opposition of the carnal heart, all rose up against me. I could not bring my mind to give up all, and thus to settle the controversy. In this state of conviction and anxiety I remained about a month, and then became as indifferent and careless as ever.

"I continued thus until about the last of May, 1829, when, one Saturday night, having bought a pair of shoes of rather finer quality than usual, I was sneered at for my vanity. Then, under a peculiar frame of feeling which must be attributed solely to the Holy Spirit, I firmly resolved to become a Christian. And from this period I date my religious career.

"For a few days I was in a state of dark-

ness and doubt. Although I adhered to my resolution, yet at times I almost despaired of success. Soon after this, a course of the keenest internal temptations commenced. It seemed as if a supernatural power was exercised over my heart, continually suggesting thoughts from which my very soul would shrink with horror. These temptations lasted several weeks, but at length gradually wore off. Since that time I trust I have been progressing, though slowly, in the way of holiness. And I trust that, in the strength of the Lord, I shall be enabled to persevere and overcome every difficulty, and attain unto the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

"'Tis Jesus the first and the last
Whose Spirit shall guide me safe home;
I'll praise him for all that is past,
And trust him for all that's to come.

"My conversion was not attended with any remarkable sense of sin. I thought sometimes, when under the influence of temptations, that my heart must be very bad to be capable of such thoughts. But I did not feel myself a lost and ruined sinner under the just sentence of God. God

seems slowly and gradually to have opened my mind to this, and also to the way in which I must be saved through Christ alone. I did not at first communicate my thoughts to any one, and I cannot tell how long it was before my state of mind was discovered. Those around me probably observed an unusual seriousness in my manner, and were led to suspect the change. But it was some time before any thing was said to me on the subject. I was very weak, having no one to counsel me. Being surrounded by infidels, my mind was often very much disturbed. Sometimes a single word against religion would throw me into perplexity and doubt for hours. I almost despaired of ever becoming firmly established. But, thanks be to God who giveth us the victory, as I went on I found the difficulties giving way, and I found myself growing stronger and stronger in the Lord."

In a note appended to the above account, dated September, 1842, he adds:—

"The above paper I have just found among some loose scraps thrown into a draw in my book-case. I distinctly remem-

ber drawing it up some time during the summer of 1829. But I had supposed it to be lost. I am glad to recover it, as it contains some things I would wish to preserve in memory. I believe it contains a true account of my early religious experience. At the time I wrote it, I had obtained some satisfactory evidence of my conversion, although, to my recollection, I had not ventured openly to profess myself a disciple of the Lord, and my mind was but in the twilight in regard to many important points in Christian experience. But all my views and feelings had undergone an entire and thorough change, and I had no other thought, wish, or purpose, than to be wholly the Lord's."

At the period of his conversion in 1829, Mr. Messinger was attending St. Andrew's Church, Philadelphia, then under the pastoral charge of the Rev. Dr. Bedell. He had a very strong affection for this eminent Christian minister, as had all the young Christians who came under his instruction or enjoyed the pleasure of his personal acquaintance. Probably no clergyman has ever laboured more successfully or more

happily in the ministry in a peculiar connection with the youth of his flock, and no one certainly was ever more amply rewarded with their grateful appreciation and memory. In the arrangements which he made for his extensive Sunday-schools in St. Andrew's, a particular attention was devoted to the elder scholars in separate Bible classes. One of these classes for young men was, for several years, under the care of Mr. John W. Claxton, a teacher whose efforts were eminently devoted and equally successful in the great work of leading youthful minds to the love and obedience of the Saviour. This class was taught at St. Andrew's Church on the morning of every Sunday. The instructions of Mr. Claxton were a great privilege to the youth under his charge, and highly esteemed by them. Alas! he was early called, like the subject of this memoir, from his useful labours on earth, to the Saviour's presence and glory.

Amid the circumstances of instruction and the varied provisions for worship which St. Andrew's then afforded him, Mr. Messinger had peculiar opportunities to be

rightly taught in the truth and will of God. Of these advantages he gratefully availed himself, and his improvement under them was faithful and valuable. He became a communicant in St. Andrew's Church in the autumn of 1829. It was about that period that I first became acquainted with him. The first occasion that I ever saw him I well remember. It was on a Sunday evening, at St. Paul's Church, in Philadelphia, of which I was at that time the rector. I noticed him as a youth, in the first pew in the gallery, on my left hand. His whole aspect was so serious and engaged, and his union in the liturgy was so peculiarly affectionate and devout, that he awakened the strongest interest in my mind. His heart seemed to be deeply and truly engaged in the worship of the evening; and the preaching of the gospel appeared to be a great refreshment and delight to him. Little could I then have thought who that boy was to be, or what he was to be to me, or that I was appointed so long to survive him after an intimate fellowship and to be the biographer of his short career. Yet thus had the Lord appointed. "Known

unto him are all his works from the beginning of the world."

Mr. Messinger remained in his connection with St. Andrew's until the autumn of 1834, when, Dr. Bedell having departed to his rest, he was placed under my personal ministry. At that time, the new church of the Epiphany, in Philadelphia, had been completed for me, and I had just opened my ministry there. Mr. Messinger came to me to offer his services as the infant-school teacher in that church. Faithful and valuable services they were, indeed. He was then occupied in the week as a teacher with Mr. Brown. His whole mind and heart were given to the instruction of the young. Their souls were precious in his sight. He felt no time or labour a burden in his efforts to do them good. This department of his life and character will come up for our subsequent consideration.

He remained a member—a very useful and important member—of that united and happy flock until he went to Virginia to pursue his studies in direct preparation for the ministry. It was a happy flock indeed. No scenes of human life can well be more

delightful than were the scenes of my ministry there. Years of sweet peace and happy fellowship were they indeed. And it is an unspeakable delight in my subsequent life to meditate upon them and count over the joys which they brought. In this relation Mr. Messinger stood to me during the few years succeeding 1834. And here we walked together, in the union of love almost parental and filial, until the providence of our Heavenly Father separated him from me. A review of this portion of his life may now be postponed until we have reviewed some extracts from his journal, in which he speaks for himself.

CHAPTER IV.

JOURNAL AND LETTERS.

While Mr. Messinger was still at his uncle's, in the prosecution of his trade, he commenced a private journal, which he continued to the close of his life. The object of this journal appears to have been wholly for his own spiritual benefit. It was to keep a record of his own exercises and thoughts, particularly on the Sabbath, for self-examination and the improvement of his own heart and life. He afterwards extended his plan to a brief history of each day, carefully examining his own conduct and motives, and making the whole contemplation of his own character a subject for earnest prayer. As an apprentice in the workshop of a trade, he had but little opportunity for mental or spiritual improvement. While his own mind and heart were under the teaching of the Holy Spirit, seeking the way of truth and holiness, he was

compelled often to hear religion and religious concerns made the subject of ridicule and contempt. In such circumstances his difficulties were many and his progress was slow. But God had been gracious to him, and had chosen him for himself, and HE was now leading him on in the way that seemed wisest and best in his sight. We will make some extracts from this journal, as serving to show the state of his mind and the progress of his character during these years of trial and toil.

The first entry in his journal is in March, 1830, when he had been four years at his uncle's, and a few months after the Lord had led him to make a public confession of the Saviour's name.

"In the midst of the bustle, care, and toil of this busy life, the Sabbath comes like a verdant spot in the midst of a dreary desert. On this day,—of all days the best,—disentangled from the vain pursuits and follies of the world, I would enjoy an opportunity of communion with God, to read and hear his holy word and freely to engage in religious exercises. Thrice-blessed day! May I ever hail thy approach with sacred joy! And

may the Lord grant that the exercises of this day may fit me to enjoy an eternal Sabbath in heaven! To preserve a record of the thoughts, feelings, and occupations of this blessed day of God is the object of this diary. Do thou grant, O Heavenly Father, that this design may be blessed to my spiritual benefit, and that these pages may record many Sabbaths spent in thy love and service."

"*April* 11, *Easter-day.*—Arose quite early, and thought of the glorious theme of the resurrection of our Saviour. My heart at first cold and hard. Prayed earnestly for reviving grace, and felt refreshed. Conversed with a friend on the subject of coming forward to the Table of the Lord. Want of humility, and a want of a sense of the exceeding sinfulness of my heart, give me much anxiety, and make me doubt whether I am a fit subject to approach the Table of the Lord. Prayed God to give me a sense of sin. Remained in church until communion was nearly over. Heart still unfeeling. After church, prayed fervently that the Lord would reveal himself, and be-

came much refreshed. May the Lord give me grace to examine myself deeply!"

"*April* 17.—On reviewing the past week, I see much sin, coldness and hardness of heart, to mourn over and repent of. What reason have I to humble myself before thee, O God! for I have erred and strayed from thy ways like a lost sheep; and yet thou hast thus far spared my unprofitable life. Oh, what reason have I to be thankful that my salvation depends not on the fickle foundation of my own righteousness! I find it almost impossible, owing to the disposition of those with whom I am obliged to associate, to devote my mind to any serious subject. Lord, thou knowest my difficulties and trials. Oh, guide my feet in the right path, and finally bring me to thy heavenly rest!"

"*May* 2.—This Sabbath has been delightful. Truly may I say, it has been a Sabbath-day to my soul. Prayer-meeting, Bible-class, church exercises, and Sunday-school, have all been interesting."

"*June* 28, 1832.—This day I enter upon my twenty-second year. In the language of the world, I am now free. But, alas! I

am not free from sin, which wars against my soul and is continually bringing me into subjection. Twenty-one years of my life have passed away. Only three of them have been in any degree given to the Lord. Even these I cannot look back upon without shame—so much love for the world and so little love for God characterize them. This should be a solemn season. I would that I could feel it as I ought. Rose this morning in a tolerably good frame of mind. But soon my thoughts began to wander. Went through my morning devotions, however, with comfort. During all the morning, maintained a frame generally calm and collected. Received a letter from my eldest sister, who, I have reason to hope, has become a Christian. She expresses much love to her Saviour. Would that I felt as much as she expresses! Was told by a Christian friend that I had not religion enough. Oh, how true it is! In the afternoon I went out to walk; my object was principally to get by myself, and to reflect on such subjects as the day should suggest. But when I tried to meditate, my mind was so distracted that I derived but little profit. Read a little in

the evening, and passed the remainder in meditation. Thus has this day passed; not entirely unprofitably, although not as profitable as I could wish. One thing is certain: I do not feel as deeply on the subject of religion as I ought. Oh for a deeper work of grace in my soul!"

"*July* 11.—Felt a little of the spiritual mind to-day,—but oh how little! Much laughing and trifling conversation carried on around me, and, though I did not join in it much, yet it has a perceptible tendency to steal away my spirituality of mind. Worldly conversation and gayety, though it may embrace nothing which may not be called innocent, is not a fit atmosphere for religion to thrive. My experience this day has taught me this. Oh that I might learn solid wisdom from experience!"

"*July* 16.—Began the day rather coldly. I feel more sensibly my own imperfections, I think, than I have ever done before. A Christian told me she did not think I had ever been thoroughly converted. I fear it may be the case. I saw myself in a clearer light than I have ever done before. I have been drawn towards God, but I have not

been completely renewed by his Spirit. I feel confident that, as the Lord has led me thus far, he will not now desert me. I look for the gift of the Holy Spirit to deepen and to render complete the work of conversion in my heart. May God give me resolution to seek it diligently and never give it up until I have obtained it! Several instances have occurred to-day of deficiencies of memory. It is a great hinderance in the way of glorifying God, and, I fear, a stumbling-block in the way of some who are willing to find occasion for offence. Cannot it be overcome? May God give me grace to try!"

The above extract shows how faithfully Mr. Messinger examined and judged himself, though his doubts in regard to his own conversion seem to be answered and settled by the very passage in which he records them. It also shows how harshly he was judged and rebuked by some one whose kindness and discrimination were not apparent in the opinion expressed. How careful ought the servants of Christ to be, in dealing with the weak and tender of the flock, to follow the blessed example of their

Master, who would not "break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax," lest the feeble should be disheartened and turned out of the way! As yet, Mr. Messinger knew but little of the privileges of the gospel or its open and gracious way of salvation for the sinner. For him clearly to decide the great question of his own spiritual condition was, with his partial light and knowledge, impossible. But God had loved him and redeemed him, and, we doubt not, had converted him by his own Spirit; and, however doubtfully and sometimes despondingly he might speak of himself, we cannot doubt but God was really sanctifying him and leading him on through all these changes, to make him at the last steadfast in faith, and truly alive in his service and active for his glory.

In the month of August, 1832, he made a visit to his mother and friends in Massachusetts. He went in a vessel by sea from Philadelphia to Boston. Some of the incidents of his journey which he has recorded show how constantly and earnestly he was engaged in trying to do good on the way.

"*August* 8.—One week yesterday I left

Philadelphia, and yesterday afternoon arrived in Boston. The passage generally pleasant,—more so than I had anticipated. There were many passengers on board, of various religious opinions. I had, once or twice, a little discussion on religious subjects. I do not know that any positive good was done; but I hope that a favourable impression was left on the minds of all. Five children were on board. For the eldest, a boy about twelve or thirteen years of age, I felt considerable interest. Conversed with him two or three times. He seemed remarkably well disposed towards religion, and had been a Sabbath-scholar. The mate of the vessel was a pious man. Had many conversations with him, and formed an acquaintance which I hope to continue. Since I have arrived in Boston, I have not enjoyed much retired communion with God until now. Feel very backward in company, owing perhaps, in part, to my having been in company so little. May the Lord help me to conduct myself in such a manner as shall be for his glory!"

"*August* 24.—Took the stage for Wrentham on the 10th, and was received with

great joy by all the family, after an absence of nearly six years. Wrentham but little altered outwardly since I last saw it. But the people, especially the younger ones, are much changed. Many of my old acquaintance are decidedly religious or deeply serious. The Sabbath-school is in a more flourishing condition than when I left home. Mother and my eldest sister are pious. Have established family worship while I remain at home. Yesterday attended lecture and Bible-class. Both very interesting. Hope a door is opened for doing good. May God help me to pass into it! Had much to flatter me and to feed spiritual pride, to which I am prone to yield. Was put upon self-examination, a few days since, by the faithful conversation of a relative. Oh, how far am I from being what I ought to be! Most deeply do I feel my deficiency. Since I have been at home my spiritual frame has been very fluctuating. Yet I think, upon the whole, that I am growing in grace, but oh how slowly!"

"*September* 2, *Sabbath.*—Have had a good day, and feel my spiritual frame revived. Heard three sermons, each of which seemed better than the preceding. The last, from

the text "Compel them to come in," a very solemn and interesting discourse. Have attempted to bring my mind into a prayerful frame, and have in some measure succeeded."

The week after this record Mr. Messinger returned again to Philadelphia, and entered anew upon his constant work. He was now regularly employed as a teacher in the week, and faithfully occupied in the Sunday-school on the Lord's day. In season and out of season he was diligent in his endeavours to do good. His journal describes his spiritual growth and character.

"*October* 7, *Sabbath.*—Have felt a calm the greater part of the day. Enabled to pray with a degree of fervour two or three times to-day, especially in the teachers' prayer-meeting, which revived me. Stayed at home in the evening while the rest of the family went to church. Little E. P. was with me. Had quite an interesting time with him. We talked and prayed and sung. His feelings are easily wrought upon. But I fear no permanent good is done yet. Agreed to pray for him. Oh may the Lord grant his blessing!"

Little E., the child here referred to, was a cousin of Mr. Messinger's, the only son of the uncle with whom he lived in Philadelphia. For this little boy and his two sisters he felt a deep interest. Various little notes and verses found among his papers, addressed to them, show how great was his anxiety for their spiritual welfare. E. P. became a faithful servant of Christ. He has been since educated for the ministry in the Union Theological Seminary in the city of New York, and is now employed as a missionary of the gospel to the heathen.

Mr. J. H. Brown, in a letter addressed to this young man, says:—

"Mr. Messinger was in the habit of praying for particular individuals at stated times. He used, for this purpose, to place the names of his pupils on paper, and retire to his chamber with them. You were often the theme of his earnest solicitations; and he used to express much faith in the hope that you would yet be brought to a knowledge of the truth."

In a letter to a sister of Mr. Messinger, E. P. says:—

"My cousin gave me a copy of the Poly-

glott Bible. On its title-page he wrote some lines. When I left home to prepare for college, I took it with me. I had it with me at college, and when I was awakened it was this Bible that I prayed over and read with interest. Who can tell how much the one who gave it to me influenced me—unconsciously, perhaps? Who can tell how much I owe to his prayer of faith for my present condition in life and the very remarkable course of discipline to which God has subjected me to bring me to himself? I have been very far from God, and truly wonderful have been his dealings with me. I was a small boy when cousin James was with us. He taught me in Sunday-school, and I remember one evening in particular he interested me and my sister in telling us about the judgments brought upon Pharaoh. I remember, too, when the house and factory were all connected in a large building, those of us in the lower part of the house used to hear cousin James praying in the garret, so loud and earnest was he in his prayers."

The following is a copy of the verses referred to. They possess no poetic merit;

but they show how he tried every possible effort to do good:—

"They that seek me early shall find me.—Prov. viii. 7.

Happy the youth whose early days
Are spent in his Creator's praise,
Whose early thoughts to him are given,
Who runs the narrow way to heaven!

To those who early seek his face,
And walk while young in wisdom's ways,
He doth his word of promise give
That they shall in his favour live.

So find the Lord; His grace to know,
What blessings has it to bestow!
All they who find his favour gain
That good which others seek in vain.

They find an everlasting friend
On whom they ever may depend;
Sweet peace on earth to them is given,
And an eternal home in heaven.

Dear cousin, now, in early years,
The world to you so gay appears,
That all its offers give delight,
And every future hope looks bright.

But ah, how soon may all these gay
And brilliant prospects fade away!
How soon will all these joys be past,
And only sorrow leave at last!

Soon may the hand of death remove
Far from your sight the friends you love;
Sickness and sorrow soon destroy
All earthly happiness and joy;

And then, when all these hopes so bright
Shall fade and vanish from your sight,
Will you not want some surer joys,
Some good which earth nor time destroys?

Oh then, while youth with vigour glows,
Seek that which God alone bestows,
And gain those treasures which will last
When earth and all its hopes are past.

Mr. Messinger's solicitude for the spiritual welfare of his friends was apparent in all his conduct and conversation. His letters to them were full of faithful warnings and earnest entreaties. Those who were Christians he endeavoured to encourage, advise, and instruct. His sister remarks upon the interest and pleasure with which she received his kind and faithful letters. She would retire with them to her room, and tremble and weep on her lost condition as a sinner, and make earnest resolutions for the amendment and government of her future life. Though for several years she was not willing to make the sacrifice required, and these impressions were like the morning cloud and the early dew, yet they were the means of sowing the good seed; and in later years God was pleased to cause it to spring up and bear fruit.

To his eldest sister he thus wrote in 1833:—

"In your last letter you express much peace and comfort in religion. I am sincerely rejoiced that you find it thus. Indeed, it cannot be otherwise to every one who pursues it with singleness of heart, and with a determination to follow on to know the Lord and to make his will the rule of their conduct and his service their great aim and end. Go on, my dear sister; press towards the mark for the prize of your high calling, remembering that He is faithful who hath promised, and that he will also perform his promise to all who put their trust in him. Endeavour to maintain a devotional frame of mind. Wherever the Christian is, and whatever he is doing, still he is the Lord's, bought with the blood of Jesus; and every action, of whatever character it is, must be done as unto him. Whether we are alone, or in company, engaged in our daily occupation, walking, meditating, reading, or in whatever we are engaged, still we must keep our eye directed upwards. We must see God in every object, observe his providence in every circumstance, and serve him in every action. This, I think, is what the

Psalmist means when he says, 'I have set the Lord always before me.' With God in all our thoughts and his blessing in all our pursuits, which we may surely expect if we undertake every thing with humble dependence on his guidance,—with his protection under every trial and in every danger, what has the Christian to fear? Surely he may say, with David, 'The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want.' Cherish affectionate thoughts of Christ. Think much of his dying love, and endeavour to apply it to yourself, as though it were for you alone he shed his precious blood. Oh, what an exalted privilege it is to be a Christian! How little do we realize it! To think that the Lord our God should condescend to own us and honour us with his friendship, and call us his brethren! Many Christians, I think, lose much of the joy of religion by thinking of these things in too general a manner. They consider that Christ died for them and is now interceding for them; but they do not make a personal application of it to themselves. Christ died for *me*. He is now pleading for *me*. He is *mine*, and I am *his*. These are the thoughts that would be well

for you to dwell upon. We should consider him as a personal friend, who regards us as much as if we were the only objects of his favour in the world. This is the way to bring ourselves into close communion and fellowship with him. Do not be discouraged if you cannot attain to this high and holy disposition at once. Remember, the path of the just is as the shining light, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day. The work of sanctification is not the work of a day or a month. We must run the race set before us. But we must run with patience, lest by impatience we become weary, and finally give up before we have attained the end. It is a very common idea with those just setting out in the Christian course that they are going to attain perfection at once. But experience teaches them a very different lesson. They find enemies to oppose, corruptions to subdue, and difficulties to overcome, which never entered into their calculation; and it is well if they are not discouraged before they have made any considerable progress. Do not think, because your brother writes these things, that he has himself attained to such a high

degree of holiness as to be in the constant enjoyment of the heavenly frame he would urge you to strive for. My dear sister, had I no other hope of the favour of God than the ground of my personal attainments, I should despair of ever being able to stand in his presence. These directions which I write to you, I would humbly and thankfully say, have been the happy experience of some few favoured moments. But the constant enjoyment of them is far above my possession. Experience tells me it is no easy matter to live the life of a real devoted Christian. Such a life, above all others, is happy beyond description. But it is a happiness which is not to be gained by sitting still in sloth and inaction and wishing for it. Oh, no. There is much hard fighting and struggling before we can obtain it. Our passions must be subdued, our corruptions overcome, sins fought against, temptations resisted, and trials endured, before we arrive at that heaven begun below which it is the privilege of the persevering Christian to enjoy. But is not this heavenly life on earth well worth all the pains it may cost to gain it? Let us, then, lay aside every weight, and

the sin that doth so easily beset us, and strive every day to gain more of that heavenly-mindedness which constitutes all the enjoyment of religion. May the Lord help us to grow in grace daily! We both alike need his help. Let us put our trust in him."

To another sister he wrote:—

"I am sorry that the tide of religious feeling is at so low an ebb at Wrentham. You mentioned that Mrs. B.'s eldest daughter had united with the church. This is interesting to me, as I well remember her when I used to attend the academy. To hear that any one whom I have known in former times has forsaken the vanities of the world and became an heir of eternal life, is always interesting to me. But when shall a brother's heart be made to rejoice at the tidings that another sister has left the service of the enemy and entered into the fold of the Good Shepherd? My dear sister, are you willing forever to renounce the hope of heaven? Are you willing to say that you will never have any thing to do with religion? Are you willing to venture on the awful experiment of dying without it, and attempt to brave the terrors of death and

judgment? You may almost as well do it, as trifle with your eternal interests and hold a parley with the world. You say you wish to become a Christian; but it seems so hard that you cannot make up your mind to begin. Do you expect it will grow easier by neglecting it? Why not set about it at once and in earnest? As long as you sit still, it will appear hard; and the longer you look at it the harder it will seem. You say you know not how to begin. The way to begin is comprised in the brief direction of the Scripture, 'Cease to do evil; learn to do well;' withdraw your mind from the pursuit of vain and trifling things, and fix it upon things that concern your eternal welfare. Cherish those thoughts and feelings. The pursuits and company and books which tend to draw away your mind and unfit you for serious thinking about your soul, must all be avoided. I do not ask you to make any sudden resolutions. Strive to get your heart deeply impressed with the importance of religion. Think of what you are by nature,—a lost and helpless sinner; and what must ere long be your condition without an interest in Christ,—an outcast from the pre-

sence of God and from all the glories and blessedness of heaven. Think of all Christ has done to save you, and all the agonies he bore for your sins. Think of the solemnities of a dying hour, the peace Christ will impart to those who die in him, and the fearfulness of dying without an interest in him. Meditate upon these things until you feel them and have a sense of your danger. Listen to the voice which exclaims, 'Flee from the wrath to come; escape for thy life. Flee to the mountain, lest thou be consumed!' When you feel these things you will feel your need of Christ. You will be constrained to go to him, and in him you will be safe. My dear sister, lay these things to heart. I scarcely know where to stop, or how to finish this letter. I will close by once more urging you to consider these things before your day of grace is fled."

To his youngest sister he wrote:—

"Remember, the morning of life is the best, and, in fact, the only time in which to lay the foundation of your future happiness and of usefulness to yourself and others. You are in this morning of life. See that

you improve your time and opportunity to the best advantage. My dear sister, you are young; and great are the blessings promised to the youth who consecrate themselves to the service of the blessed Redeemer. Do you wish to be happy? Attend to religion. 'Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.' Do you wish to appear lovely in the sight of the good? Then choose him for your friend, and follow him for your example, who is the chief among ten thousand and the one altogether lovely. Do you wish to die happy? Then give up your heart and affections to that Saviour who takes away the sting of death, and, when you walk through the valley of the shadow of death, he will be with you, and his rod and his staff shall comfort you. Do you wish to join that glorious company of angels, and the assembly of the first-born whose names are written in heaven? Then you must belong to the company of the saints upon the earth. Think what a place heaven is. 'There is a river the streams whereof make glad the city of God.' There is a habitation of the righteous,—'a house not

made with hands, eternal in the heavens.' But remember that none shall enter there who have not made Christ their friend on earth. The redeemed alone shall walk there, and the ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads. My dear sister, are not these things worth thinking about and caring for? You are not too young to think about them, and soon every opportunity may be cut off forever. Though you are young, you may soon die. The chilling blast or the nipping frost may wither the flower while it is yet in the bud. But the lovely flower of early piety is only transplanted by the hand of God to a more congenial soil. In the paradise of God it shall bloom with unfading beauty. May the Lord teach you so to number your days as to apply your heart unto wisdom!"

This beloved sister has, since the departure of her faithful brother, joined him in the world of glory, where they may unite to praise Him who hath redeemed them by his blood, and made them meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.

She died in the triumphant hope of the gospel, April 19, 1848.

These extracts from Mr. Messinger's letters show the fidelity of his affection and the earnest character of his piety in this early period of his Christian life. He was in all his relations equally faithful, and sincerely desirous to be useful. He gave thus a happy example of the affectionate character of true piety. The blessed fruits of the Spirit will always be thus displayed. They will be seen in the manifestation and the increase of tenderness, sympathy, and love. When a youthful heart is converted by the Holy Spirit, we must look for these immediate results. The trials and the opportunities of the youthful Christian are in the domestic relations in which he is placed. Here are his duties, and here must be exhibited the results of his renewed and sanctified nature. He must be a blessing to his household. Brothers, sisters, and parents, must see the evidence of the work of grace in all the little trials of his relations to them. They are all witnesses. Whether they be truly Christians themselves or not, they are

very discriminating and intelligent witnesses of the truth and sincerity of the youthful profession. Let every young Christian see in the subject of this memoir the beautiful illustration of such affectionate fidelity, and strive to follow him as he followed Christ.

CHAPTER V.

JOURNAL CONTINUED—COMMENCES TEACHING.

Mr. Messinger kept his daily journal for several years with much care, but entire privacy. I have already made some extracts from the journal, and shall have more to present. But I forbear to copy too largely, lest my youthful readers should not feel a sufficient interest in so minute a description of his own mind and feelings.

In the month of September, 1833, Mr. Messinger commenced the employment of teaching, which he pursued until he devoted his whole time to studies for the ministry. The following is the notice which he makes of this change in his pursuits:—

"*September* 1, 1833.—May this be a day long to be remembered! It is the holy Sabbath, the first day of the week. It is a starting on a new sphere of life, on which I expect to-morrow to enter. Oh that it might be a fresh starting-point in religion! As I

am about to enter upon a new scene of duties, I have purposed to lay down some rules for the government of my future conduct. May God help me to observe and profit by them!

"I resolvé to endeavour to live near to God, and to maintain a more constant communication with him.

"To endeavour to maintain a command over myself, and to govern and keep within bounds my inclinations, appetites, and passions.

"To endeavour to improve every moment of my time, and strive to fill it up with something useful.

"Periodically to call myself to account for the manner in which I live, and for the improvement I make of the opportunities which I enjoy for advancing in holiness, knowledge, and usefulness.

"In order to do this, I resolve to maintain a constant presence of mind, to watch for opportunities for improvement by observation and reflection, to take account of every occurrence, and lay it by for future use, as a subject for meditation and practical improvement.

"I resolve to endeavour as much as possible to plan out whatever I have before me, and to do all things in order and by method, that so I may avoid confusion.

"Especially to be punctual in morning and evening devotion, and to endeavour to be devout and spiritual in them.

"To endeavour each morning to lay out, as well as possible, the work of the day, and at night to call to mind as much as I can recollect, and whatever is useful to commit to writing.

"To cherish a kind and affectionate disposition towards all around me, to seek their good, and to take an interest in their welfare."

September 3.—Mr. Messinger commenced this day his career as a student and a teacher. He was now twenty-two years of age. Many discouragements were in his way. But his determination was fixed, his plans were laid, and he entered upon them with his whole heart. At first his progress was slow. Seven years' close attention to mechanical labour, with no opportunity for mental cultivation, had left his mind in a wandering, undisciplined state, which he found it ex-

tremely difficult to conquer. This, with the disease which was finally fatal, and the seeds of which were already sown within, proved a great hindrance to his progress in study, and was a severe trial to his Christian temper and spirit. This disease was an affection of the spine, caused, as he said, by his back being overtaxed with effort while in a weak state. This was probably the source of that lethargic and wandering state of mind of which he so often complained, and which he habitually attributed to the sinful state of his heart. From this he suffered much depression, and was induced often to pronounce severe judgments upon his own state. How happy is the remembrance that the gracious Lord knows the infirmities of his servants, and, "where there is a willing mind, accepts according to that which a man hath, and not according to that which he hath not"!

While Mr. Messinger was pursuing his studies in his new position, he omitted none of the active Christian duties in which he had been engaged. The rules which he had laid down for the government of his life he endeavoured strictly to carry out. Order

and method marked all his movements. His plans were distinctly arranged, and his time was so divided as to give to each day its appropriate share and place.

Mr. Brown, with whom he commenced his work as a teacher, says of him:—

"He entered my school in the year 1833, and remained with me about four years. He was not very quick in acquiring knowledge, but possessed an astonishing amount of industry and perseverance. Prayer preceded and accompanied all his actions. After one year's engagement in my school, I took him into my family and increased his labours in the school. It was there that I learned his real worth. I was in the habit of studying until twelve o'clock at night and rising at six in the morning. Custom had rendered these hours familiar and easy to me. But Mr. Messinger had much to contend with before he could keep the hours I did. Yet so determined was he, that, at his earnest request, I allowed him to sit near enough to me, at the same table in my study, to be reached by a ruler, that I might rouse him from sleep in the evening. He was regular and methodic in all things.

He drew a plan for the disposition of his time, assigning a certain portion for devotion, for preparation of the lessons he was to teach, for teaching, and for study and reading. Saturday had its peculiar duties for recreation—the only time he allowed himself for that purpose. He kept a list of his Sabbath scholars, marking off a definite number, which he strictly visited every Saturday, even when great self-denial was necessary to do so. On Saturday evening he selected the chapter to read to his class, studied it, and prayed over it; selected his hymns, and in a like manner studied them. Then, in a memorandum-book which he usually carried with him, he put down the heads of all the remarks he intended to make on Sunday. His income was small. Yet he had written, in his account-book, one part for his mother, one for the Lord, one for charity, one for religious publications, the rest for himself. The particular portion of each I do not recollect, as I never saw this book but once. His whole income was so small that I was particularly struck with his being able to give away any thing. While Mr. Messinger was residing with me, one of my pupils in

his class was taken sick, and, after a long sickness, died. I suggested to him to write a memoir of this boy. As I had only at any time to make a suggestion for him to act, he immediately undertook it. Having been but little accustomed to composition, he wrote it several times entirely anew. It was finally published by the Sunday-school Union, under the title of 'Little Theodore.' Very few, in reading this little book, can imagine the amount of labour bestowed on it, and the prayers for its usefulness. Mr. Messinger endeared himself so much to my whole family that I recall his life with peculiar pleasure."

After about four years' residence with Mr. Brown, Mr. Messinger was occupied for a few months as a teacher in the Orphan Asylum. But he found this engagement to interfere so much with his private efforts to study that he was obliged to relinquish it, though the little subjects of his care were deeply interesting to his affectionate spirit.

In the year 1837 he entered the school of Mr. T. D. James, in Philadelphia, and remained with him until he went to the

Theological Seminary to devote his time wholly to theological studies.

Some extracts from his private journal during this period of his life will show the spirit with which he engaged in his new work.

"*September* 7, 1833.—Took a retrospective view of the past week. After all the resolutions with which I commenced, I find myself but little advanced either in respect to religion or mental improvement. Perhaps I could hardly expect it to be otherwise at the commencement of a new occupation of life. Thus far, my employment as a teacher has been more than pleasant. I have found an increasing interest in the occupation ever since I commenced. But the pleasures I have experienced have had too little of God in them; have not been able to maintain that continual sense of his presence, and that delight in his service, which I had resolved. But still I feel encouraged, and resolve to endeavour to go on trusting in the Lord."

"*September* 9.—Spent nearly the whole day in school. Find myself more and more deficient in qualifications. Must make re-

newed efforts to improve my knowledge and to fit myself for the duties of my station. Have been enabled at frequent times during the day to lift my heart to God in prayer and thanksgiving."

"*September* 13.—Read, in the Sunday-school Journal, a memoir of the Rev. J. Barr, which was interesting to me on account of his beginning his studies so late in life and under more discouraging circumstances than myself. I have sometimes thought myself too old to think of acquiring an education. But his experience gives me fresh courage."

"*September* 19.—Arose early. But my mind continually going astray to the ends of the earth. What an ungovernable thing is the mind, when it has long been permitted to have its own course in folly and vanity! Let me strive this day to reduce it to obedience."

Mr. Messinger's desire and effort to gain improvement from every passing event and occupation is most interesting. He was constantly on the watch for means of spiritual advantage and gain. He had no relish for society that did not recognise and remember God. Books which were adapted

to benefit neither the mental nor moral nature were laid aside as unprofitable. He considered life too short and time too precious to be spent on trifles, and therefore he endeavoured to fill up every hour with something useful. It was in this way that he became able to accomplish his work amid many discouragements, and thus to become an example to young men amid kindred difficulties who may come after him.

"*November* 24, *Sabbath.*—Attended St. Andrew's Church, and listened to one of the most eloquent and impressive sermons I ever heard from Dr. Bedell. It was on the subject of giving to the cause of God, in behalf of the missionary cause. In the evening at our Bible-class. Exercises rendered exceedingly interesting and affecting by the feeling exhortations of the teacher. Nearly all the class were melted to tears. My own heart was much revived. May this evening be long remembered by many, and may eternity disclose that souls were this night born into the kingdom of God! May I henceforth live more for God!"

"*December* 29.—A change took place this day in regard to my class in the Sabbath-

school. I am now at the head of an infant-class of about twenty little boys. I feel the task is an arduous one; but I also feel much interested in it. May the Lord help me to discharge my duty well!"

"*March* 23, 1834.—Have much reason for thankfulness, and yet more for humility. The Lord has upheld me and borne me through considerable difficulty. Our Sabbath-school was left without a superintendent, and almost destitute of teachers, this afternoon, so that two or three brethren and myself were left in charge of from fifty to seventy boys. But we were enabled to manage them and keep them together. For this we have much reason to be thankful. But I have, at the same time, much reason to be humbled, because I am too much disposed to put myself forward, and to think of myself more highly than I ought to think. Pride is a besetting sin with me. Lord, give me grace to be humble. Oh for a deeper sense of obligation for all his mercies!"

"*August* 30.—Last Monday morning commenced my school duties, after an interval of a month. This is the last week I expect

to spend in this house, where I have resided eight years. I go to-morrow to live with Mr. Brown. Of what a succession of changes may this be the beginning! Solemn reflections should engage my heart. Where shall I be eight years hence? What scenes shall I pass through in that time? The veil of uncertainty hangs over the whole. God only knows. Two things I wish now to regulate—my employments and my expenses.

"*August* 31.—In the afternoon to-day went to hear Dr. Tyng, in the lecture-room of his new church. Heard a very impressive sermon on the time for seeking the Lord. May it be abundantly blessed! Felt deeply interested, and, I trust, profited. From church I went to the house of Mr. Brown, where I am now to board. Spent the remainder of the evening in family worship and private meditation and devotion. I would bless the Lord for all the privileges of this day. See to it, oh my soul, that they be not all in vain."

"*September* 2.—Heard this day of the death of our pastor, Dr. Bedell, who died in Baltimore, on the 30th of August. His death will make a great breach in the con-

gregation, and in the Episcopal Church generally, by whom his loss will be deeply felt. He is now beyond the reach of suffering. 'Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his.'"

"*September* 3.—Attended the funeral of Dr. Bedell this afternoon. Funeral very large. Service performed by Dr. Tyng. 'Ashes to ashes; dust to dust!' A standard-bearer in the camp of Israel hath fallen. But where is the sainted spirit? Beyond the reach of human wo. 'Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord: yea, saith the Spirit, they rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.'"

"*September* 8. — St. Andrews reopened this day for divine service, after having been closed for six weeks. Hung in black on account of the death of our lamented pastor. It presented an appearance of solemn majesty I have seldom seen equalled. Sermon by the Rt. Rev. Bishop Moore. It was very affecting, especially at the close, when the bishop, speaking of 'his beloved nephew,' was almost overcome."

"*September* 22. — Safely am I brought to another week. How thankful should I be!

Yesterday the Sabbath was spent, for the most part, in a pleasant and profitable manner. In the morning, heard an excellent funeral sermon from Dr. Tyng, on the occasion of the death of Dr. Bedell. He drew a lovely sketch of his departed worth and character, and urged the people to follow him in his faith and excellence. May I be enabled to profit by this exhibition of the character of one who will long live in my memory!"

"*Sabbath, October* 12.—Yesterday attended the consecration of the new church of the Epiphany, which I purpose to attend in future. Heard this morning an excellent sermon from Dr. Tyng, on the great truths he intended to preach in the new church. In the afternoon, an uncommonly good one from Bishop McIlvaine on the necessity of grace to help us to do the will of God. It was truly a feast. But, now, what good has it done me? Lord, apply thy truth to my heart, and make me feel its power and value. I want a more humble sense of my own utter inability to do any thing acceptable. Take away all my self-confidence, and make me to depend on thy strength alone."

"*November* 1, 1834.—Last evening united myself with the new Church of the Epiphany, under the pastoral care of Dr. Tyng. Had a very pleasant and profitable meeting. Attended church this morning. Communion administered by Dr. Tyng in a very solemn and interesting manner. Had some degree of devotional feeling during the service. May the Lord bless and sanctify it to my spiritual good! The Sabbath is now past and gone. Oh for grace to improve its privileges aright!"

These last records of his journal present the opening of his new relations in the church to view. From this time his life was passed under my notice until he went to the theological seminary. It was a valuable and faithful life, indeed. I had every reason to love him and to be satisfied with him. In the church he was a pattern to all; and in his own labours in it abounding and constant. This part of his history I may therefore proceed to trace.

CHAPTER VI.

SUNDAY-SCHOOL LABOURS.

The Church of the Epiphany, to which Mr. Messinger had now attached himself, was founded in a united interest in the Sunday-school enterprise. It might almost be said to have been founded upon its Sunday-schools. While yet but a little flock of Christians had been gathered there, they maintained a Sunday-school quite unsurpassed in its size and interest among the older churches of the city, and, perhaps, in other cities in the land. This church was established in what was then a new section of the city, with but a scattered population around it. The principles of decided Christian doctrine and practice on which it was established prevented its becoming immediately a very popular church, even if its location had been more central. But the remoteness of its position united with its known principles

of instruction to restrain a very large immediate increase of its congregation. The few families who united to constitute it were, however, of one mind and one heart. They came together upon the ground of an intelligent love for the gospel in its teaching and its influence; and they gave a character to the church which in its subsequent history it has never lost. None came there but those who were at unity with the spirit of the place and the people. And it was, therefore, without exception, the most united congregation that I have ever seen. In twelve years' ministry there, I never once saw or heard the evidence of alienation among themselves or in any of them from their pastor. They were a happy, faithful flock, loving the gospel and supporting it, liberal in their gifts, and active in their labours, maintaining a unity of spirit and a refinement of habit and intercourse which rendered all my relations to them happy and all their mutual relations encouraging to me. To this flock Mr. Messinger joined himself in the commencement of their assembling.

The first Sunday of November, 1834, to

which he has referred, was the occasion of the first communion in the church after its consecration. The evening previous had been a meeting of the communicants which was always held there for special prayer before the administration of the Lord's Supper. On this occasion he presented himself and asked admission as a member of that flock. We gladly received him. Though I had not known much of him personally at that time, his general character was well known to me, and his accession to us was a pleasant and encouraging fact. From that time he may be said to have been never absent, so steady, uniform, and constant was his attendance on all our occasions of worship. There was a lecture on every Wednesday evening, a teachers' meeting for a long time on every Thursday evening, and a prayer-meeting on every Friday evening. There were also two services on the Sabbath. At all of them we were sure to see Mr. Messinger, however few besides might be there. By the early members of that church he will be long remembered, and his example and influence valued with a cordial degree of esteem.

We immediately began our Sunday-school at the Church of the Epiphany, arranged in all its departments of a male and female infant-school, intermediate school, and Bible-class, making six little assemblies for instruction, held in six different places. They were all small at first; but they rapidly increased, until in a few years they numbered near one thousand children and adults under habitual instruction. Besides the weekly meeting of the teachers for instruction from their pastor in the lesson of Sunday, there was also a monthly meeting of teachers as an association for the business of the school, at which monthly reports from all the classes were given and read. At all times Mr. Messinger's face and voice were familiar, and in the language of prayer and praise it was our comfort and pleasure to hear him. He had been previously engaged as a teacher in a branch or mission school of St. Andrew's Church in one of the public halls of Philadelphia. But when he came among us he proposed to take charge of our infant-school of boys, including the ages from three to seven or eight. There were about twenty of them

at the commencement of this work. He was peculiarly fitted for this undertaking. His kindness and gentleness of manner, and his real living interest in the religious welfare of the children, gave him great influence with them. He loved their souls, and longed and laboured for their salvation. He visited them, and talked with them, and prayed with them, and wrote hymns for them, and letters to them, and might be said to be unceasing in his efforts to bless them and do them good. It was impossible not to love him in this relation. After he left Philadelphia, and even in Africa, he still remembered them, and wrote to them. And his fellow-teachers, after his decease, have recorded his death in their annual report of 1847, with the following tribute of their affection:—

"As the teacher of one of our infant-schools, his memory is affectionately cherished by many a parent and child in our church. It is common to hear the poor of this congregation remark that they loved the ground on which he trod. There are communicants in our church who trace their first religious impressions to the faithful and

affectionate visits of the beloved teacher of their little ones."

His affection for these little ones and his interest in their spiritual welfare ceased only with his life. Among the last records of his pen are several letters addressed to his beloved Sabbath-school, in which he had been so long a devoted teacher and guide.

While in connection with the Sunday-schools of St. Andrews, he says, in his journal:—

"*August* 30, 1834.—I have been much perplexed in mind to know whether I shall leave the Sabbath-school in which I am at present engaged. My removal to the house of Mr. Brown will place me at such a distance that I shall not be able to give that attention to my class which I could wish. Yet, if I withdraw, my absence will be much felt, and I know not how to dispose of my class. I have tried to commit my way to the Lord, and have prayed for direction."

"*September* 14.—Went to the infant-school of St. Andrews, and spent a few moments in talking to the little boys. My inclinations and thoughts are much drawn towards attempting to get up an infant-

school in Dr. Tyng's new church. Feel too much engrossed by the plan, so as to lead my mind away from other duties. I must guard against this. May the Lord direct all my ways, and may I be disposed to follow all his teachings!"

"*September* 27.—In an animated and cheerful frame of mind the greater part of this afternoon. Conversed with Mr. Coffin, our superintendent, about leaving our Sabbath-school, and was enabled to contemplate it with more freedom from the influence of selfish motives than I have done for some time past. I was enabled to pray freely for direction in this matter, and asked the Lord to hedge up my way, if, prompted by inclination, or any selfish motive, I should be tempted to do wrong. Feel now more than satisfied that it is best for me to withdraw, if I can find another field where I can labour with more advantage."

"*October* 4.—Since yesterday afternoon my mind has been much interested in the case of Charles Theodore Schinckle," (the little boy mentioned by Mr. Brown,) "who is probably on his death-bed. Called yesterday, but he could not speak to me, nor

did he recognise me at all. He has manifested much affection for Mr. Brown and myself, and has shown much sensibility on the subject of religion. If it is the Lord's pleasure that he should be taken away, may he take him to himself, and sanctify the affliction to the good of his relations!"

"*October* 26.—Followed to the grave, on Friday, the remains of Charles Theodore Schinckle, a lovely little boy, who, I doubt not, has gone to heaven. He gave pleasing evidence to his friends that he was prepared for death, and expressed a perfect willingness to depart. May his memory be blessed to others!"

"*November* 29.—Attended Thursday evening meeting,—a very pleasant meeting in reference to Sunday-schools, in the vestry-room of the Church of the Epiphany. These meetings are to be held every Thursday evening, and promise to be very interesting and profitable."

"*December* 8.—Attended this evening the Sunday-school Teachers' monthly concert. Went in rather a dull and cold state of mind; but, before I came out, my heart became warmed and my feelings deeply in-

terested. I have seldom attended a meeting which was more calculated to interest and to arouse teachers to their duty than the one this evening. Lord, grant that I may profit by it! Oh, awake me to a deeper sense of my own duty! By a statement made there, it seems that nearly all the children who have been committed to the House of Refuge had been in Sabbath-schools. What a comment on the labours of teachers! Let me lay it deeply to heart. What a picture of unfaithfulness and lukewarmness does my labour as a Sabbath-school teacher present! Shall it be so longer? Lord, forbid! Oh may I at once come up to the measure of my duty!"

"*December* 20.—Have felt much interest during the week in my cousin, E. P., who boards with me. Have prayed with him every morning. May the Lord give me grace to conduct myself towards him in such a manner as to win him to Christ! Have for a long time omitted any direct effort to promote his spiritual benefit. Find him much more favourably disposed towards religion than I had anticipated."

"*September* 13, 1835.—Was in a very plea-

sant frame of mind all the morning, but in the afternoon far otherwise. My class of little children were dull, and disposed to be restless; and, to add to my mortification, my class was visited by our pastor. Felt much mortified that we exhibited so poor an aspect, and my feelings disturbed by it all the afternoon. God grant that it may prove a salutary lesson of humility, and teach me not to look to the praise of men! How much I covet this praise in my heart, this afternoon's experience has shown me. Lord, teach me by thy grace to seek to please thee rather than men."

"*July* 8, 1837.—On Wednesday took a few boys out to bathe, an excursion from which I had anticipated much pleasure, but met with a sad disappointment, from which I trust to learn a salutary lesson. We were overtaken by a shower, and, after waiting until nearly dark, with no prospect of the rain ceasing, was obliged to obtain a carriage to bring home the boys. The excitement, anxiety, exertion, and exposure, were greater than I recollect ever to have experienced. Did not reach home till nine o'clock. I feel that the trial was a whole-

some one. May the Lord bless it to me, and cause it to do me good!"

This last record recalls the sadness of that evening forcibly to my mind. Mr. Messinger took quite a large number of little boys, among whom were two of my own sons. The shower of which he speaks was a terrific thunder-gust. They had gone into the country on the banks of the Schuylkill. The afternoon passed, and evening came, and my own and many a parent's heart was filled with uncontrollable anxiety and alarm. It was the night of my weekly lecture at the church; and when the hour arrived I was obliged to go to fulfil my duty there, though my state of suspense was an absorbing subject of thought. The darkness of the night was extreme, and I was in perfect ignorance whither the boys had gone. It was not until some time after my public duty was finished and I had returned home that tidings came to me of the safety of the boys. I may well say, with Mr. Messinger, the trial was great. The Lord be praised, still, for their protection from danger that seemed imminent and extreme!

During the period of time which these

extracts from his journal cover, Mr. Messinger had pursued his business as a teacher in the week, though in various engagements. In May, 1835, he left Mr. Brown, and became a teacher in the Philadelphia Orphan Asylum. Of this he says:—

"My station there is a very responsible one. Oh for grace and wisdom to fulfil its duties! My situation now is pleasant;—I have a room to myself, and, with such advantages as I now enjoy, I hope to make some advancement in my studies."

Soon after this he records:—

"*July* 30.—A circumstance has this day occurred which ought to be long remembered. One of the boys under my charge at the Orphan Asylum has just been brought very near to death. Two of them strayed away from the Asylum after school, and wandered on the banks of the Schuylkill. One of them, going into the water to attempt to swim, was carried beyond his depth, and would have been drowned, had not a man rescued him just at the last moment. He was brought home insensible, very much to the alarm of all in the institution, but is now in a fair way of recovery. May this dis-

pensation be attended with the effect to awaken us all to a stronger and deeper sense of our duty! Had he been taken away, have I done my duty to him? One thing is certain, he was not prepared to go. So teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom."

Mr. Messinger remained but one year as a teacher in the Orphan Asylum. He found the duties of his station too engrossing of his mind and time, and requiring too much attention to be withdrawn from his studies. But the warm and affectionate interest he felt for these orphans never ceased. He often visited them, and ever manifested a tender concern in their welfare.

"*May* 10, 1836.—After a residence of five months at the Orphan Asylum, I have now left it. I found the duties so arduous, and the cares so many, and my time so much occupied, as to afford me no opportunity for study. I was, therefore, induced to resign the station. Whether I have effected any good among these children, God only knows. I feel great reason to be humbled, for I am conscious of much unfaithfulness and remissness in duty towards them. Yet

I trust I have felt some interest in their spiritual welfare. I have conversed with all the larger ones separately; and the smaller ones I have often assembled to instruct in the things of religion. Alas! I must confess, too often with a cold, unfeeling heart. Yet, unworthy as I am, and feeble as have been my efforts, may the Lord bless them to the good of those children! I shall always feel an interest for them. They manifested much affection for me, and it was hard to bid them farewell. May the Lord bless them all, and help me to feel and pray for them!"

"*January*, 1837. — It is now more than seven years since I hoped that I passed from death unto life. But what little progress have I made in religion since that time! I have, it is true, grown in moral and intellectual strength,—the natural consequence of growth in years. But have I grown in personal holiness? I fear, alas! that my spiritual attainments have not kept pace with my physical or mental. But shall I go on and live as I have lived? I make no resolutions. I am tired of making them only to break them. I have been looking

over my journal, and find many records of resolutions which I have failed to keep. I will look to the Lord for grace to serve him with more devotion and spirituality of mind, and to put some of my former resolutions in practice. I want to look within and converse with my own heart. Lord, help me to do so."

These extracts display a view of his faithful and devoted life. He was struggling through all the difficulties of his earthly condition to obtain an education. Quietly and patiently he toiled on, receiving thankfully the portion given him by his Heavenly Father, and having at least the consciousness that he was constantly endeavouring and desirous not to live in vain. His labours in the Sunday-school were unremitted and faithful; and, discouraged as he often seems to have been with his own state, his example and influence were uniformly on the Lord's side and patterns to all of a growth in holiness and fidelity in the Lord's service. In his preparations for the Sabbath he was most conscientious and faithful. His watchfulness over his scholars followed them in the week. And even after they were re-

moved from his charge he still addressed them in letters, or made further efforts for their salvation. His letters to the children were often very interesting, and always simple and intelligible to them.

The following is to a little boy who had left his school:—

"My dear Boy:—You told me last Sabbath that you were going away to stay a great while, and I wanted very much to come and see you to bid you farewell before you went, but I could not. I, therefore, write you a letter, that you may have something to remember your teacher by. Perhaps, my dear boy, we shall never see each other again. You may have heard the voice of your teacher for the last time. He may never again tell you you must give your heart to the Lord. How well you remember what he has said to you, he cannot know. He has talked with you about your soul, and Christ, and heaven. Will you go away and forget it all? He has prayed that you might have a new heart, and love your Saviour, and be happy in heaven. Will you not pray for yourself? Will you go on and care nothing about Jesus who has done so

much for you? Although we must now part, yet there is a time coming when we shall meet. We shall meet at the judgment-seat, and there it will be known how you have heeded what your teacher has said to you. Shall we meet then in heaven, to live with the Saviour and angels and all the company of holy men and holy children, and be happy with them forever? My dear boy, unless you forsake your sins, and go to the Saviour for pardon, and give your heart to him, where he is you cannot come. We part, perhaps, to meet no more. But, wherever you go, remember the eye of God is upon you. He watches you, and takes strict account of all your actions and thoughts. You may go away from your parents, friends, and teacher, but from God you cannot fly. He is everywhere.

"Remember the advice of your teacher. Keep this letter, and read it over when you are far from him who wrote it. Read your Bible. Pray to God that he would bless you, and save you, and make you happy in heaven forever. This is the prayer for you of your affectionate Sunday-school teacher."

To another little boy he wrote:—

"My dear John:—As a letter from your Sunday-school teacher may perhaps afford you some pleasure, I will write a few lines to let you see I think of you though you are so far away. I received by your uncle the beautiful present you had the kindness to send me, and am highly pleased with it. Nothing could have been more acceptable than such a book. I have read it through with great interest and pleasure. And that is not all. I think I have learned many good things from it also. You know that teachers sometimes need to be taught themselves, that they may be better able to teach others. It was a pleasant thought, while I was reading it, that my little John had now become my teacher, by sending me such an excellent book, and I am indebted to him for all the good I may derive from it.

"I hope you do not forget the instructions of your Sunday-school. But you know we must not only remember them, but we must act in accordance with them. I recollect when I was a boy, of reading an old proverb, which was something like this:—'We must pay attention in order that we may

hear; we must hear in order that we may understand; we must understand in order that we may remember; and we must remember in order that we may practise.' So that hearing, understanding, and remembering will do us no good at all unless we practise. Now, how is it, my dear John, with you? Do you really try to do what is right and good, as well as remember and think about it? Are you dutiful and obedient to your parents, gentle and affectionate to your sister, and kind and obliging to all around you? Do you pray earnestly every day for a new heart and a right spirit? Do you try with all your heart to love and serve God? When a little boy has such kind parents to watch over him, and so many friends who try to teach him what is good, how dreadful would it be if after all he should grow up to be a wicked man and never have the love of God in his heart! It would be far worse for him than for the poor little heathen child, who never had any one to instruct him or to care for his soul. But I hope better things of you, my dear boy; and if it should please the Lord to spare you until you become a man, I trust that you

will be a good man, and love the blessed Saviour who died for you, and be a blessing to all around you. But you know that now is the time to begin. Although you are young, you are not too young to love the Saviour. You remember one of our texts, 'I love them that love me, and they that seek me early shall find me'? And if you seek the Saviour now, and love him while you are young, how much happier will you be, and how much more good will you do to others, than if you put it off, and think there will be time enough when you are grown up, when perhaps it will be too late to find him. He does not say that they who seek him when they are old shall find him. The promise is to the young. I hope, then, my dear boy, that while you are a child you will be the Lord's child, and choose the narrow path which leads to heaven. I shall probably not see you until you return, but I shall often think of you and pray for you. And when you pray for your parents and friends, will you not remember your teacher? How delightful it will be to know that I have one little boy praying for me!"

To another youth he thus wrote:—

"My dear young Friend:—This letter is written by one who feels deeply interested in your welfare for time and for eternity. Although almost a stranger to you, yet he knows what you once felt on the subject of religion; and it is with the deepest sorrow that he has heard that you have gone back to the world, and given up the hope of eternal life for the poor fleeting pleasures and allurements of sin. After having broken the fetters of Satan and set out in the way of life, you have again turned away and suffered yourself to become entangled in the snares of the wicked one who seeks to ruin your soul. What can I now say to persuade you to return to those ways which are pleasantness to all who walk in them, and end in everlasting joy? Well do I remember the tears you shed last summer, when, kneeling in the midst of our little company of brethren, you poured out your soul to that Saviour whom you have now slighted. Were not those tears seen by angels? Angels rejoice over one sinner that repenteth. Jesus wept and suffered for sinners. Why?

He wept that we might weep;
Each sin demands a tear.

And when sinners weep over their sins he rejoices. But how will it be with him who, having once set out in the way of righteousness, falls back into the snares of sin? How will *he* feel when he sees his once-slighted Saviour, now surrounded by his servants, shouting their triumphant hallelujahs to him that sitteth on the throne and to the Lamb forever;—and he must be forever separated? Will not the thought of what he might have been, add an hundredfold to his eternal misery? Will not the thought that he, too, might have joined that glorious company but for his own folly, torment him as he sinks into the regions of despair? Oh, why will you sell your immortal soul for that which is of no value? Let me entreat you to return—

And seek an injured Father's face—

before he rise in his wrath and swear that you shall not enter into his rest. He is yet waiting to receive you. Hear his gracious words, 'I will heal your backslidings, I will love you freely;' and will you not return? How gladly would the people of

God, who have beheld with sorrow your departure from the narrow way, rejoice again to receive you as one alive from the dead! That you may return to the fellowship of the saints on the earth, and be made an heir of everlasting life, is the prayer of your sincere and affectionate friend."

I might very much enlarge the account of his labours in the Sunday-school. The little infant-class which he taught was a constant testimony to his wisdom and fidelity as a teacher. He gave his mind constantly to the work of attracting and blessing them. He prepared lessons on passages of Scripture expressly adapted for them. He composed many little hymns for them. He wrote for them a catechism in verse, which was particularly attractive and valuable to them. He was never absent, that I can remember, even so much as once, from his class. His punctuality and fidelity in duty made him very dear to us and very useful among us. He kept a regular Sunday-school journal, from which many of the foregoing extracts have been taken, and in which are many incidents recorded, illustrating his manner and spirit in teaching.

His little boys were extremely fond of him, and were encouraged to ask him freely any questions in their lesson. I may give a few more scattered extracts from this journal, but it would be impossible to go much more extensively into it.

"As I was speaking of the Saviour to-day as a child who never sinned, one little boy asked, 'Suppose a child had never sinned, and had not a new heart and a right spirit, would he be good?' I explained the impossibility that a child, without a new heart, should live without sin. Yet the circumstance was pleasing to me, as it gave evidence that the necessity of a new heart was strongly impressed on his mind. May the Lord bless these little ones and give them new hearts, indeed!"

"*January* 12, 1840.—Morning stormy and snow on the ground. Only thirty-two were present. They were generally very attentive and interested. Went to school with new feelings. The past week has been one of deep interest to me. I have been in a revival of religion among others, and I humbly hope I have in some degree participated in its spirit. Feel in reference to

my past labours as if all had been done not for Christ, but for self. Pride, selfishness, and a desire for personal gratification, seem to have been my ruling motive. I feel humbled, but would fain feel more humbled. I desire to become low at the foot of the cross, and cry 'God be merciful!' Prayed this morning that the Lord would work by me; and I humbly trust he did, for I cannot remember the time when I spoke with the feeling I have had to-day. Not unto me, O Lord, but unto thyself, be all the praise. I cannot express what I have felt. Oh that this might be the beginning of a new life! May some truth lodge in the children's hearts! Grant it, Lord, for Christ's sake.

"Had with me a friend whom I had invited; and the fact that I had an invited friend, whom I felt desirous to please, drew off my heart from that near perception of the presence of Christ and warm desire for his favour and love which I would ever desire to feel while instructing my class. I would humble myself at my Saviour's feet, and implore his pardon for this my sin, and beseech him not to withhold his blessing on account of my unfaithfulness.

"One little boy to-day interested me very much. There seemed all day to be a marked seriousness about him. Yesterday his mother told me that two Sabbaths since, the last time he was present, after returning home, he burst into tears, and on being asked the reason, he said he felt his sins to be so great. He manifested much distress. Although two weeks have elapsed, he still seemed tender, and was melted to tears during our exercises. Must not this be from the Lord? Oh for grace, wisdom, and deep humility!"

"*September* 25, 1842. — This is my last Sabbath with the children. May the Lord bless them and guide them into his fold! I talked with them by way of taking leave of them, and, after prayer, left my school in charge of Mr. S., who is my successor. Our pastor addressed the children in a very impressive and happy manner. Oh that the Lord's blessing may ever rest upon the school, church, and pastor!"

Thus ended his labours in the Epiphany Sunday-school. For eight years had he gone in and out, a pattern of holiness and usefulness. The children mourned over his

separation from them. And their parents and families regretted much the loss of an instructor so faithful and affectionate.

Years have gone by with me, but I recall his labours, and tender and useful methods of teaching, with constant delight. He was faithful above many. And all delighted in the honour which he received, and acknowledged the justice of the approbation which was bestowed upon him. He really loved the souls of the children intrusted to him, and dealt with them as those for whom a Saviour died, and whom the Saviour had committed to him to be trained for glory. Many Sunday-school teachers have been connected with me, in whom I have had great delight. A more sincere and useful one than Mr. Messinger I have never seen. And in this lower but not less important ministry, he "purchased to himself a good degree and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus."

CHAPTER VII.

PREPARATION FOR THE MINISTRY.

In 1837, Mr. Messinger engaged as a teacher in a large school in Philadelphia, established by Mr. T. D. James. Here he remained until he relinquished the employment of teaching in 1841, and devoted his whole time to study in preparation for the ministry of the gospel. Soon after he entered Mr. James' school he established another work for himself in a Sunday evening Bible-class for boys. His journal records the exercises of this class, which was an independent effort of his own, and his great interest in conducting it. Whatever he did, he did with his whole heart. And in all his labours he seemed to keep the one great end of spiritual advantage for himself and for others constantly in view. In the year 1838, his sister had gone to Oberlin Institute, in Ohio, to prepare herself for a teacher. Mr. Messinger thus wrote to her:—

"My dear Sister:—When I reflect that I have not written to you since you have been at Oberlin, I feel as if you had just reason to accuse me of neglect. But I often think of you both, and it is my constant prayer that the Lord may be with you, and direct you, and make you abundantly useful.

"The work of education is a great, important, and solemnly responsible work to those who are engaged in it. I think that there is no office, except that of a minister of the gospel, more dignified or important; and it is cheering to see how our whole country is awaking to the subject. But how many there are who undertake the responsible office who are not, in the least degree, sensible of its responsibility, and who have no higher object than to inform the understanding, while the heart is left to pursue its downward course unchecked and unrestrained! If we are to be a family of instructors of the young, let us see to it, that while we impart a knowledge of science to those whom we instruct, we forget not that they have immortal souls, and that to us has been committed the task and privilege of directing these souls in the way that leads

to everlasting life. If we fail in doing this, we fail in performing the most important part of our duty; and, more than this, we incur the just displeasure of God, who in his providence has committed them to us. It is a truth of which I feel more and more sensible every day, that just in proportion as our own hearts are feelingly alive to the great interests of religion will be our influence for good upon others. He who loves the Saviour most, will do the most good. Is it then our ardent desire to promote the welfare, temporal and spiritual, of our fellow-beings? Let us cultivate the love of God in our own hearts. Do we desire to be abundantly useful in our day and generation? Then we must diligently seek and earnestly strive after holiness and spirituality of mind. Unless our own hearts are filled with light and love, vain are learning, talents, and every thing else.

I have just received a letter from mother, together with a deed of the farm, which has been sold. Poor old Small Hope! Its hills and woods, and brooks and meadows, must now pass into other hands, and we shall never behold them again as our's. But no

matter. Let us rejoice in the hope of a better inheritance, which shall never pass away. May the Lord guide you, and carry you on from grace to grace, and enable you in all things to live for his glory!

"Your ever affectionate brother."

During the year 1840, Mr. Messinger's journal manifests a remarkable and happy change in his own state of mind. He attended, at the commencement of this year, a series of religious exercises which were held in various churches in Philadelphia, and during which very precious influences of the Holy Spirit seemed to descend upon many. His own mind and heart were exceedingly animated and refreshed by them. Of these meetings for worship he says:—

"*January*, 1840.—I felt myself to be in a low and languid state, and resolved to attend as often as I could. I little thought what a blessing was in store for poor unworthy me. My feelings became more and more interested, and I trust the Lord has thus met me, and breathed into my soul such measures of his Spirit as I have never before experienced. The Lord has brought

me to see my past unfaithfulness, and it seems as if I had been living entirely for the world and self. Nearly ten years I have been a professor of the name of Christ, and in all that time I have hardly done any thing for God. Blessed be God, that he has brought me to see these things, and opened my eyes! My heart at times seems to glow with love and desire for greater manifestations of his grace. I feel a desire to get down in the dust and lie low before him, and to be any thing and do any thing he would have me. Last Sabbath was a sweet day to my soul; and I found, in talking to my little children, how differently I spoke when I had the sweet influence of the Spirit in my heart from what I did when I had only the words of truth in my head. It is my desire to consecrate myself entirely to the Lord with all that I am and have, so that I may consider not a faculty of my soul, a moment of my time, or a cent of my money, my own; but all to be the Lord's, to be used as by his steward and for his own glory. And thou, Lord, who searchest the hearts, knowest whether I am not sincere in making this consecration to thee.

Search and try me, and if I am not, oh show it to me, nor let me deceive myself any more. Thou art the witness. Here, Lord, am I. Take me, and do with me as seemeth good in thy sight."

This spirit of simple consecration to the Lord breathes through all the succeeding records of his journal, and shone in all the conduct and labours of his life. In June, 1841, he makes the following record in his journal:—

"1. With reference to God the Father, I would desire to feel an humble, filial, child-like spirit; to be able to look to him as a child looks to a father in whom he confides; to cast all my cares upon him; to trust myself wholly to his guidance; to rely upon his promises with implicit confidence, and to feel towards him that perfect love which casteth out fear.

"2. With reference to the Lord Jesus Christ, I would feel a deep, tender, and affectionate sense of what I owe to him, a fervent love for his loveliness, gratitude for what he has done for me, a full confidence in his faithfulness, and an humble, cheerful, joyful submission to his authority. I would

regard him as my prophet to instruct, my priest to intercede, and my king to rule and govern, and feel it to be a sweet and exalted privilege to serve him, and to esteem nothing hard by which I can promote his glory and manifest my love and gratitude to him.

"3. With reference to duties, I would feel that every duty is a privilege, if thereby I can serve and please my God and Saviour.

"4. With reference to fellow-Christians, I would feel that every Christian, of whatever name or denomination, and whatever be his circumstances, is a dear brother, a fellow-heir of the same hope and a child of the same Heavenly Father, the beloved of the same Saviour, a citizen of the same city, an inheritor of the same glory with myself.

"5. With regard to the cause of Christ, I would feel an earnest desire that it may be promoted, and a holy fervent zeal in carrying it forward by whatever means I may be able, and to esteem no exertion too great to promote this end.

"6. With reference to impenitent sinners, I desire to feel a deep and tender pity and concern for their souls, and an earnest, affectionate desire for their conversion and

salvation, and to cherish this feeling and temper to such a degree as shall effectually take away all diffidence and backwardness in speaking to them, and shall make me ever ready to improve every possible opportunity to do them good.

"7. With reference to the world at large, I would desire to feel a holy disregard of all its vanities, its opinions, and its favours, and to feel as an ambassador for Christ and a citizen of heaven in the midst of it.

"8. With reference to mental accomplishments, I would desire to regard them as valuable only so far as they can be used for the glory of God and the good of my fellow-beings.

"9. With reference to personal appearance, dress, &c., I would desire to be free from all pride and vanity, and to attend to those things only with the desire to promote my own usefulness and the glory of God.

"10. With reference to lawful gratifications, I would desire to renounce self in them all, and to regard them only as means of enabling me to glorify God and to discharge my duty.

"In all the above particulars I would de-

sire to renounce all dependence upon them, or resting in them, as having the least degree of merit or influence in procuring for me the favour of God, or comfort or satisfaction in myself. I would desire, as a poor, empty, and vile creature, to look to Christ, and to him alone, for all I expect, and all I hope for, of comfort and enjoyment in religion."

In this constant effort to grow in grace and to fulfil his Master's will, Mr. Messinger was making a full proof among us of his real and maturing Christian character. Few young men have ever been seen in the church whose walk in life was so uniformly pure and manifestly holy. His daily conduct was a pattern to all. In the business of daily instruction, and in the weekly engagements in the Sunday-school, he equally succeeded in attaching the minds of the young and commanding the confidence and respect of the mature. We looked upon him as a young Christian who ought to have higher means of influence and usefulness in the world. His early circumstances, his deficiency in classical education, and the pressure of an apprenticeship to a trade, had

consumed his youthful years with but little opportunity for mental improvement or gain. And when he threw himself out from this constrained pressure, and attempted to sustain himself in a more literary and improving occupation, the pressure of poverty, and his constant desire and determination to aid his venerated and beloved mother to the utmost of his power, made the difficulties in the way of extensive study by no means less. The Christians around him were much interested in their observation of this persevering energy, this meek contentment, and this holy example and effort, as illustrating a mind and spirit which ought not to be buried in such obscurity, or so apparently lost to the welfare of others.

It was from such an interest and confidence that I was authorized by a Christian friend in Philadelphia, in the spring of 1841, to sound him upon his views regarding the gospel ministry, and to propose to him the means of education for the purpose if he desired it. It was a remarkable coincidence, illustrating, I trust, a divine call, that I found his mind had already been directed to the subject in anxious inquiry and thought, and

he had been looking for the possibility of some way for the completion of his purpose and desire. His brother and sisters had directed him to the Oberlin Institute in Ohio, as a place in which he might perfect his cherished wish. His views upon this proposal he records in his journal, in the month of February, 1841. In March he records the conclusion of his consideration of the subject:—

"Called this evening upon my pastor. Expressed my views about going to Oberlin. He told me he was authorized to say to me that, if I will devote myself to study, an individual unknown to me will furnish me with the means. This to me was an unexpected and entirely new proposal. Returned home with my thoughts full of it. Tried to pray about it. Thoughts very confused and disturbed by such an unexpected favour. I want to feel myself like a little child in the hands of the Lord. Oh may he direct me in the way in which I should go!"

In writing to his sister, he thus speaks of this new opening:—

"I have that to communicate which has very materially altered my plan of going to

Oberlin. I say my plan,—I ought rather to say the Lord's plan, for he has brought about new and unexpected circumstances which I cannot but feel are an indication that Oberlin is not the place for me. My pastor, Dr. T., a short time since communicated to me in conversation that he was authorized to offer me an amount per annum, which, together with the little I have laid by, will enable me to lay aside every other care and devote my whole attention to study for the ministry. This offer, coming so unexpectedly, I cannot but regard as from the Lord. It is the wish of my pastor, through whom it comes, that I should remain here and pursue my studies under his direction. This opening, which the Lord has placed before me in such an unexpected manner, I feel to be an additional call to me to devote myself, soul and body, all I am and all I have, to his love and service. Oh that I could feel it a thousand times more forcibly than I do! Yet, faint and feeble, as I mourn to say, the desire sometimes is, I do feel a desire to be wholly the Lord's, and to live for no other purpose than to glorify him. It often occurs to me

that my dear sisters at Oberlin are praying for me, and that much of the manifestation of the grace of God to my soul is in answer to their prayers. I trust you are receiving and imparting good in your station at Oberlin. May the Lord bless you abundantly! Oh, what a changed sister is M. since I last saw her! Then a careless worldling; now, I trust, a devoted and inquiring follower of the Lord. What hath God wrought for our family! What a wonder of mercy! It seems but a few years since none of us thought or cared about eternal things. Now, I trust, all of us are heirs together of the grace of life. Oh, may we, as we have received much from the Lord, so also do much for him and his glory!"

For one year Mr. Messinger pursued his preparatory classical studies in Philadelphia. His health, however, began to give signs of failure, and his journal records days of pain and suffering in the same aspect of disease which was finally the instrument of closing his valuable life. Yet he passed on, uncomplaining and determined, in his studies, contending with the twofold difficulty of the

early want of mental disipline and the incipient pressure of secret disease.

In September, 1842, he passed his appointed examination, and was admitted a candidate for holy orders in the Episcopal church. Thus the Lord had opened to him a door of entrance into the sacred ministry. He records the fact in his journal, with an earnest prayer that he may have grace to cast himself wholly upon the Lord, and to depend upon his guidance and grace.

CHAPTER VIII.

THEOLOGICAL STUDIES.

HAVING become a candidate for orders, Mr. Messinger now sought a regular theological education. For the attainment of this, he went to the Theological School of Virginia, established near the city of Alexandria. This institution has been from its commencement the nursery of an evangelical ministry in the Episcopal church. Its students come from all sections of the country, and its graduates are to be found equally scattered in their ministry throughout our land. Wherever they go, as a general characteristic they have with them a faithful testimony of evangelical truth, and have been an agency of unspeakable value in the church in which their ministry is cast. All the American Episcopal missions to foreign lands have been supplied with labourers from this school. The missionary bishops in China and Africa are graduates of this im-

portant institution. The connection thus established with foreign missions tends to bring the subject of their interests constantly before the minds of students there, and thus not only to keep up the supply of missionaries, but to carry out among our churches at home a spirit and knowledge which will excite to missionary effort and promote the propagation of the gospel from the Episcopal church.

In September, 1842, Mr. Messinger entered this institution. He went there with a watchful and anxious spirit. He found an influence even in theological study greatly tending to secularize the mind and to make its action earthly and selfish. Against this influence he desired constantly to strive. His feelings and views on this subject he expresses to a cousin after a residence for some months at the seminary:—

"The intellectual advantages here are of a very high order, but the spiritual, far inferior to Philadelphia. Although our professors are eminently good and holy men, and the company of pious students assembled here from all parts of the country form a society highly agreeable to a Christian mind,

yet there seems to be a deadening influence, inherent I am almost disposed to believe, in the very nature of literary institutions, as well theological as collegiate, against which students who wish to preserve the life of religion in the soul have to watch with the greatest care and diligence. The Christian doubtless always finds enough in his course heavenward to make it necessary for him ever to exercise care and vigilance;—there are so many snares without and so many temptations within, and the great enemy of souls is always ready to take advantage. But that the very study of those things which pertain to the kingdom of God should be fraught with temptation to forsake him in spirit, is what one would little expect. And yet, I believe, such is the fact. Oh that all our young men who are looking forward to the gospel ministry may be fully aware of it and earnestly strive against it! Now, if ever, is the time when the church of Christ wants able, faithful men, who shall be like Stephen, full of faith and the Holy Ghost, and who shall go forth manfully to fight the battles of the Lord against the floods of errors and delusions which are coming in upon us. I

suppose you are no stranger to these errors. They assume every form and shape. They come upon our church in one form, and they assail other portions of the Lord's vineyard in other forms. Doubtless the working of Satan is in the whole."

With this spirit of watchfulness and earnest desire to be kept from evil, Mr. Messinger began his theological course. His journal gives so clear a history of his further life in this new relation that we may make now some extracts from that.

"*September* 24, 1842. — Have been very busy this week in arranging matters preparatory to my departure for the Theological Seminary. Called on our pastor this evening, who very kindly furnished me with a letter to the Rev. Dr. Sparrow. Many expressions of kind regard and regret at my leaving the city have given me occasion of humble gratitude to God, who has enabled me to gain the undeserved esteem of so many friends."

"*Sabbath, September* 25.—This has been a day of great excitement and of much interest. Parted finally with my Sabbath-school children, and have been in our beloved Epi-

phany Church, perhaps, for the last time. I am now to enter upon my course of theology. Oh that I could feel more deeply the solemn responsibility of the office to which I am looking forward! Oh for grace to help from on high, that my whole soul might be subdued and consecrated to Christ!"

"*October* 8.—I am now in the Theological Seminary, where I now write. I have bid farewell—perhaps a final one—to a city where I have spent the greater part of my life;—a city which has been, I trust, my spiritual birthplace, and which is endeared to me by many deeply interesting recollections. I arrived at the seminary on Thursday morning. Though an entire stranger, I was treated with the kindness of an old friend by many of the students who had previously received my name. The seminary is full to overflowing, so that, although I have now been here more than a week, I have no fixed room to myself, but am temporarily occupying the room of an absent student. Every thing about the seminary seems very pleasant and agreeable.

"Last Sunday I heard Dr. May preach in the chapel of the seminary. In the after-

noon I was requested to take charge of a meeting of coloured people, held in the prayer hall, in the basement of the building. Spent the rest of the day in my room in meditation and prayer.

"The bustle and strangeness and unsettled state of my circumstances not very favourable to spirituality of mind or devotional exercises. Yet I have not been without some degree of enjoyment in prayer. My thoughts and affections often run back to Philadelphia, and to dear friends whom I have left there. What I now feel the want of, is grace to enable me to abide continually as in the presence of the Lord; to live, act, speak, study, and do every thing as unto him and his glory. Oh that I may be enabled to live thus! To-morrow the holy communion of the body and blood of our blessed Saviour is to be administered in the chapel. Oh that I may come with a body undefiled and a mind sanctified, and receive the blessed emblems to the strength and refreshment of my soul!"

"*October* 16.—I find myself pretty hardly pushed in my studies, and have little leisure time. But I trust it will be a benefit to me

to be kept to a course of close studies for a time, and will tend to check those wandering, desultory, and slothful habits of mind which are great enemies to me. But, alas! religion in my soul seems to be at a low ebb; and, so far as I can observe, it seems to be in a corresponding state around me. Oh for a reviving, quickening grace from on high! Have felt the necessity of this for a day or two past with especial force. How shall I ever be a faithful, able minister of Christ while the power of divine grace is so little felt in my own soul?

"In the afternoon went with Mr. Mendenhall to the Almshouse. The inmates, to the number of twenty or thirty, were assembled. Found some pleasure and interest in the meeting. We both spoke and prayed.

"Commenced last night a little meeting for prayer, in which three of the students met together for the purpose of promoting our own spiritual benefit in social prayer. I trust that good may result from it. Oh for the reviving, quickening influences of the Spirit of God in my heart!"

"*December* 4.—I think I may record the

experience of the past day as an evidence that I am not entirely forsaken of God, although I deserve it. I have had manifest evidence of his goodness to my soul; and although sin and infirmity have marked my experience, yet the Holy Spirit, I humbly believe, has moved upon my heart, kindling affections and awakening feelings which could have come from no other source.

"Why, then, should my sinful soul be so doubting and distrustful? Why may I not take courage, and press onwards and upwards? Surely I am not straitened in the Lord, but in myself.

"Went with Mr. Graham to the Almshouse, and spent an interesting afternoon. Could not speak so well as I desired, but had freedom and enlargement in prayer. We visited and prayed with two sick persons, one of whom, an old woman, appeared to be a Christian, and the other, a young woman, professed to be seeking the salvation of her soul."

"*December* 29.—Set apart this day as one for meditation and prayer, partly in reference to my present spiritual state, and

partly in reference to the year which is now closing. My spiritual state is wretchedly low and languid. My old besetting sins seem strong as ever. I find at times some little enjoyment in divine things; but, alas, how little! When I look at myself, and strive to see whither my will and desires all tend, I cannot find reason to question that they are for the Lord. But when I look at the manner in which my feelings and affections are wrought upon by divine things, I see much, if not to make me doubt, at least to make me mourn. Pride, selfishness, and corruptions of various kinds, I find still strong in my heart; and faith, humility, and love, if they exist at all, all seem so small and feeble in their growth as to be hardly perceptible. When I would send my thoughts heavenward, I have to force them; while they run out spontaneously upon worldly things. Ah! should it be so? Need it be so? Must I always be so bound down by flesh and sense that my soul will not rise to Christ and heaven without such an effort? O Lord, enlighten my dark mind, and enable me to discern clearly my state, what my hindrances are,

and how they may be overcome; and grant me grace to subdue every thing which interposes between my soul and thee.

"This closing year finds me at the theological seminary studying for the ministry. Of this I had no idea one year since. But it is not in man who walketh to direct his steps. Where shall the close of another year find me? None but God can tell. But it is a far more important question for me, *how* shall it find me? Oh that it may find me more filled with the knowledge of the love of Christ, and a conqueror over every opposing influence that hinders me in running the race which is set before me!"

"*January* 7, 1843.—We had a deeply interesting meeting to-night in Mr. Shanklin's room. I think I was profited. The question was proposed among us, Why may we not live and be like J. B. Taylor? And my answer was and is, The only want is of a simple and entire consecration to the Lord. Felt a desire to consecrate myself anew wholly to the Lord. Why may I not from this time forward be wholly the Lord's, and think, and feel, and speak, and act, for him?"

These are but specimens of a journal which runs through his whole course of study. His great anxiety was to maintain within himself a truly spiritual and heavenly mind, and to cultivate the work of the Holy Spirit in his own heart. The language of his journal often seems depressed; but this was far from being the aspect of his life. He was particularly disposed to be social, affectionate, and cheerful in his relations to others. He maintained the most pleasant correspondence with his family, whose affections were very much entwined around him.

In writing to a married sister at this period of his life, he shows something of this cheerful and playful domestic spirit which was tempered and adorned always with the influence of true Christian simplicity and love:—

"I received your welcome epistle a few days since with much pleasure. I had long heard of it as in a forthcoming state, but had well-nigh given it up. Could I have been sure that you were still at H., I think I should not have waited for it before I wrote. But you Western folks are so mi-

gratory in your habits that we hardly know where to find you for any great length of time. And so, sure enough, you have pulled up stakes at H., and pitched your tabernacle at B. for a season. Well, I trust the Lord has directed you and it is for good. I think, from your description, you must have a fine wigwam in your present quarters—quite a little colony. I should like very much to take a peep at you. However, this cannot be at present. How it will be next summer I cannot at present tell. You ask for some account of our seminary. I suppose you mean the external situation, for the catalogue I send you gives a full account of its internal arrangements. It stands upon a lofty elevation, northwest of Alexandria, distant about three miles, commanding an extensive prospect. The Capitol of the United States is in full view, and very prominent. In the spring and summer it is a beautiful spot; but in winter it is rather dreary, for the country around is almost as destitute of inhabitants as any of your Western wilds, and such a place for mud I never saw before. We have a chapel on the seminary grounds, the congregation

of which is made up mostly by the students, professors' families, and a boarding-school about half a mile distant. In regard to spiritual things, there is a tolerably good spirit prevailing here, although far below what would be desirable. Our professors are all eminently good men, which is a great blessing in an institution like our's. On Thursday we have what we call the faculty-meeting, which is a meeting for prayer and exhortation conducted by the professors for the spiritual benefit of the students; and their familiar exhortations on those occasions are very practical. On Sunday afternoons the students are mostly occupied in little stations about the country, where they go mostly two-and-two to hold meetings for prayer and exhortation, or conducting such little Sabbath-schools as may be gathered. We have some fifteen or twenty such stations about the seminary, from two to six miles distant. The whole are under the direction of a society called the 'Society for the Religious Improvement of the Neighbourhood.' So thinly settled, however, is the country, and so bad the walking, that comparatively little can be

done in winter, and many of the stations have to be suspended. My own station is at the almshouse in Alexandria, which is not subject to the same irregularity, there being no difficulty in assembling the people. This station affords valuable experience to me, looking forward to the ministry. It is an almshouse, hospital, and workhouse, all in one, so that we have the physically and morally wretched to deal with. Our greatest difficulty is the extreme ignorance of the people, scarcely any of them being able to read. Nevertheless, the Lord has granted us some encouragement. Two individuals, the fruits of our labour, we trust, have united with the church, and two more will do so soon. I have another engagement in which I feel a great interest, which is to address a company of children every month in Alexandria, and another company each alternate month in Georgetown. My long habit of teaching children makes this an interesting work. Should I ever be permitted to come into the ministry, I think I shall esteem preaching to the little ones of the flock one of the most delightful parts of pastoral duty. I some-

times feel quite anxious, perhaps too anxious, to get through my course of study and to be at work. I am afraid I do not feel as I ought—certainly not as I wish—the awful responsibility of the office of a minister of the gospel. My cold, dull heart seems to have little realizing sense of the worth of souls, compared with what I desire to feel. Oh that the Holy Spirit may infuse into my heart more holy zeal and love before I come into the ministry!

"Although I direct this letter to you, yet I wish it to be regarded as a kind of family letter, and be sure you give mother her share. I hope she may sometime have another son's family to visit, although when and where is among the uncertainties of the future. May the Lord's blessing rest upon your habitation and his presence abide continually in your midst!"

"*July* 2, 1843.—On Friday last, the Rev. Mr. Boone, missionary to China, arrived at the seminary, and has created quite a sensation among the students in reference to the China mission. On Friday night and last night he addressed the students, and preached again this morning. The question

has come with some force to my mind, whether the Lord has not a work for me to do there. Mr. B. has so presented the question that the whole consideration in reference to our offering ourselves rests on whether we are willing, leaving all difficulties and obstacles to be referred to after consideration. I have felt this morning much of a disposition to offer myself, although there are such obstacles in my way, on the score of difficulty in learning the language, advanced age, and rheumatic affection in my back, as to give me every reason to conclude that it is not the field for me. Still, if I were to offer myself, and the committee should, under the guidance of God, overrule my objections and select me to go, I should feel as if I was in the path of duty. And should they, on the other hand, reject me, I should then feel satisfied that I was in the path of duty in not going. In this light I viewed the matter this morning; and I sought to cast myself on the Lord's guidance in prayer, and found some comfort in so doing."

"*July* 24.—This week is set apart by a number of our students for fasting and prayer

with reference to preaching the gospel in China, in connection with whom I propose to observe it. May the Lord direct my mind and heart, and show me clearly what I ought to do! Purpose to observe the first part with more especial reference to a deeper view of the solemn responsibility of the ministerial office, and a deeper sense of divine grace in my own heart."

"*July* 28.—Endeavoured this morning seriously and prayerfully to consider the grand question to which I have regarded the whole week as preparatory. I think the Lord assisted me. Found some comfort in prayer, and freedom and liberty of thought in meditation. Shall I offer myself to go to China, or not? was the great question before my mind. And, after serious and prayerful deliberation, I came to a negative conclusion. Oh may the Spirit of the Lord guide me aright! I would desire to say, 'Here, Lord, am I. What wilt thou have me to do? If thou wilt not send me, qualify and send those better fitted for the work, and bless them abundantly in it, and bring the poor benighted Chinese to a knowledge of the truth.'"

"*January* 1, 1844.—The past week has been one of deep and solemn interest to me. In the commencement of the week the Rev. Dr. Savage, missionary to Africa, was here, desirous to engage some of the students to go out with him on his return in April. Without the least intimation on my part, I was pointed out to him as a suitable person to go; and he brought the subject to my mind in such a manner that I was made to feel that I could not decline without a very manifest indication that it was not the Lord's will. The proposal crosses all my preconceived plans and inclinations, and it has not been without some struggling that I could bring my mind to it. My rebellious heart would frequently rise in opposition, nor have I yet entirely overcome my feelings of repugnance. I have tried to commit the whole to the Lord, and determined in all this matter to follow the leadings of his providence so far as I can discover them, irrespective of my own feelings, which I find to be basely selfish. Yesterday wrote to my pastor, Dr. Tyng, for advice and direction, and shall rest the decision chiefly on his expression of approbation or the contrary.

This proposal has revealed to me something of the selfishness and worldliness of my wretched heart. Although I have long since professed to give up myself entirely to the Lord, to go where he shall send me, and to do the work he will have me to do, yet now, when I am brought to the test, my sinful heart rebels, and discovers how far it is from real and entire submission. Although professing to give up all, alas! I have kept much back. Have sought grace from the Lord to subdue the rebellious temper, and think I have found it in some degree. But there is much to be done yet."

"*January* 25.—This day received a letter from my pastor, approving of my going to Africa ultimately, but strongly disapproving my cutting short my theological course. Therefore for the present I have suspended the whole matter, leaving it in the hands of the Lord."

This year passed, like the preceding, in a faithful devotion of himself to his studies and to every opening for personal usefulness which seemed to be set before him. The great subject of a missionary life was always before his mind. Nearly every record in

his journal refers in some way to it. God was manifestly leading him on to this point. But the path was still by no means clear. At the end of this year he records a full consideration of the subject again:—

"*December* 31.—The last day of the year. Set it apart for meditation and prayer. Spent most of the morning in these exercises. In the afternoon spent some little time in reading, some in active employment, and the evening again in meditation and prayer. Tried to take into consideration the important question in reference to my future life, which has been before my mind so long,—whether I shall devote myself to a foreign missionary life on the coast of Africa. Prayed and meditated much about it, and tried to look at it calmly and in view of death, judgment, and eternity, and so to settle it as I shall wish I had when I come to review life on these solemn occasions. The whole question seems to turn on this: What is the will of my Lord and Master concerning me? Will he have me to labour in Africa, or will he assign me a field of labour in my native country? And the only way in which I can come to any

conclusion as to his will is by considering where it seems probable I can do the most good. And in deciding this matter a number of things come up for consideration:—

"1. My thoughts and feelings have never been specially drawn to a missionary life. I have long felt a general interest in missions, but not that special interest in them beyond other fields of ministerial labour in which I should desire especially to be engaged. Although my attention has been called to the subject, especially in the last year, by Dr. Savage, yet I could never bring myself to be fully satisfied that this was the sphere of duty for me. Ought I to regard this as any indication of the Lord's will? Had he marked out the foreign missionary field for me, would he not have drawn my thoughts and feelings more especially to the subject? And could I expect to labour successfully in a sphere where my interests and feelings were not more warmly enlisted? But this of itself is a consideration of small weight; for, could I be satisfied that I was in the path of duty, I could doubtless so throw myself into the work that my interests and feelings would become enlisted.

But this is only one out of many items of consideration.

"2. My advanced age; for I am now almost thirty-four years old. I sometimes feel that I ought to have been fully and fairly at work years ago. But now, if I go to Africa, with the process of acclimation to go through, habits and customs to learn, language to acquire, &c., it will be two or three years before I shall get to work fully and efficiently. Besides, the drudgery I find in the study of languages makes the idea of sitting down to acquire another foreign language repugnant to my feelings. Now, ought I to waive all these, and go? Yes, if the path of duty is made clear to me; not otherwise. Again, I am informed that tobacco is an indispensable article of commerce with the natives. Could I so overcome my repugnance to this nauseous drug as to handle it daily, and probably submit to learn its use, in violation of all my previous principles and convictions? I say again yes, if convinced that I am in the path of duty; but not otherwise.

"3. When I consider my mental habits, I cannot feel satisfied that they are as well

adapted to the desultory, off-hand kind of labour required of a missionary as the more orderly and methodical pursuits of a parish clergyman. I usually find that, in order to get along with comfort and satisfaction to myself, I must have my whole course of thought and action marked out before me. Could I then acquire those off-hand habits, and that readiness for any new emergency, which I conceive to be so necessary to a foreign missionary? By the grace of God, perhaps I could, in some degree, although the difficulty I should meet with, as I apprehend, renders it extremely questionable whether I could labour with the same usefulness and advantage in a foreign field that I could in a parish at home. But no one of the foregoing considerations, nor all of them together, would deter me from going, were the path of duty made clear to me; although, if it were not clear, they would interpose strong obstacles. But a more weighty consideration than any of these is the following:—

"I have for years laboured under a complaint in my back, arising, as I conceive, partly from a rheumatic affection and partly

from weakness, owing to its having been on a certain occasion overtaxed while in a weak state. In warm weather, I feel at times considerable difficulty to arise from it. Now, in the debilitating climate of Africa, constantly subject to intermittent fevers, which frequently affect the back with pain, I think there is reason to apprehend that I should be nearly laid aside from labour a great part of the time, and waste the remaining years of my life in accomplishing little or nothing, or else injure the cause, destroy my own influence and usefulness, and discourage others, by returning, after having wasted much precious time and exhausted my energies in a profitless experiment. It might, indeed, be otherwise in the providence of God, but such seems to me to be the probability; and with such a probability in view, it seems to me that I ought not to go without a call, strong, loud, and clear, and so manifestly directed to me as to make the path of duty very plain. This is the conclusion to which I have come. Lord, if I am wrong, oh show me my error, and direct me in the way in which I should go!"

In a note appended subsequently to this record, he says:—

"The above was expressive of the state of my mind, in reference to the work of foreign missions, eight months since. But, since that, the Lord has so ordered his providence concerning me as to bring about a complete revolution in my own mind, and, it seems to me, has given indications of his will concerning me sufficiently clear to direct me to go, unless my way shall hereafter be barred up. And now I have determined, in reliance upon his grace guiding and strengthening me, to press into the way which seems to be opened before me, believing that he will enable me to overcome all the above-named obstacles."

The year 1845 found him occupied in his closing studies at the seminary. Early in this year, not knowing that his mind had been considering the subject of a foreign mission as of immediate obligation, and thinking that a period of pastoral labour at home would, under any circumstances, be of advantage to him before entering upon a foreign field, I wrote to him in regard to a rural parish in Pennsylvania, from which I

had received an application for a pastor. To this he refers in his journal:—

"*January* 26.—Received last night a letter from my pastor, Dr. Tyng, advising me of a vacant parish of which they wished me to take charge, and recommending me to be ordained immediately. This brings before me a new subject of consideration, over which I must think and pray. Have not suffered my mind to dwell upon it to-day, but must determine it soon."

"*February* 5.—Tried to observe this day as a day of fasting, meditation, and prayer, but I succeeded but poorly. Thought much of a sermon I expect to preach. Soon finished a sketch of it; but dissatisfied with the whole. Have lately received communications which render it probable that I shall soon be called into the vineyard as a minister of Christ. Oh how unfit! Tried to make it a subject of prayer. May the Lord direct my mind aright!"

"*February* 9.—Have felt, for some days past, some sense of the solemn responsibility soon to come upon me, as a minister of the gospel. Oh that I could feel it tenfold more deeply and carry the burden of

it to the Lord, and, with a devout, humble heart, sue for grace to enable me to prosecute it faithfully!"

"*February* 15.—About preparing to leave the seminary. Expect to go at the end of next week. Not knowing what is before me, I sometimes feel a little anxiety, but less, perhaps, than I ought to feel. Oh that I could trust in the Lord with all my heart, and press forward looking to him! I have good reason to think that the Lord has directed me in the way in which I expect to go. But without his grace, and a more vivid perception of divine and eternal things than I now possess, I fear I shall do but little good."

This was the close of his career as a student at the seminary. Deeply as he felt his own unworthiness and spiritual need, his character was, in the view of others, one of exemplary holiness and fidelity. His kind and gentle spirit made him many friends. His earnest and active piety gave me great and positive influence. His industry and persevering habits of study made him highly respected by the professors and students. Their united accounts of him were highly to

his credit as a candidate for the work of the ministry. They loved him and confided in him. They parted with him with great unwillingness, but with strong hope of his permanent and extended usefulness in the church of God.

The Rev. Dr. Sparrow, one of the professors of the seminary, in a letter to Mr. Messinger's sister, written after his decease, says of him:—

"Your brother, the Rev. E. J. P. Messinger, during his three years spent in this institution, was a favourite with us all—officers, students, and citizens in the neighbourhood. It could not well be otherwise. In his strictly academic duties he was a model of industry, punctuality, and thoroughness. By his example, springing as it did from principle, he exerted a considerable influence on the habits of application of his fellow-students. In the lecture-room he always appeared prepared for the duty of the day, and acquitted himself to the satisfaction of his instructors.

"His religious example, also, was of the most faultless kind. I really regretted his removal from us on the completion of his

studies on this account, aside from every other. It was manifest to all that he was a man of God of one single object, and that object ever *vividly* before his mind. His fellow-students plainly saw that his conversation was in heaven, and felt the influence of his intercourse drawing up their own minds to high and heavenly things. His spirit was of a most devotional cast. It was believed that he spent much of his time in prayer. Indeed, it was plain to all who associated with him. It was only at a throne of grace that he could have received those daily supplies of strength which enabled him to walk day by day so holily, righteously, and godly in the world.

"His activity in doing good to others also testified to the strength and purity of the 'new life' from God which was in him. Though feeble in body, he did not decline the laborious walks which were necessary to bring him in contact with the poor and neglected in the vicinity of the seminary. His exertions for their spiritual benefit were very acceptable, and, I doubt not, attended with a blessing.

"When he left us, I regarded him as a

man probably destined to do much good in his day. And when I heard that he had resolved to go to Africa, I felt persuaded that *that* was the very sphere in which his exertions would be likely most effectually to promote the glory of God and the salvation of men. But God's ways are not as our ways, nor his thoughts as our thoughts. And yet I would indulge the hope that our Heavenly Father has not really frustrated the end which we hope to see accomplished, but has only changed the mode of bringing it about. I would hope that, by the *record* of his life so prematurely cut off, he, being dead, may yet speak, and be the instrument of much good. I find it profitable myself to look occasionally at his portrait which hangs in my study, and reflect upon his lovely Christian character and the mysteriousness of the providence which ordered his lot."

CHAPTER IX.

ORDINATION AND MINISTRY.

In the month of February, 1845, Mr. Messinger closed his residence at the seminary and returned to Philadelphia. We have seen the struggles of his mind in reference to his future sphere and character of ministry. God was leading him in his own way, purging him and preparing him for a far earlier termination to his work than we imagined. Like his preceptor, Dr. Sparrow, I had formed large anticipations of his usefulness and probable eminence in the later years of his ministry. Such were the anticipations which my confidence in his piety, my knowledge of his talents and industry, and my strong personal affection, led me habitually to form when I laid out his future course in my view. But God, who loved him better and knew him better, had prepared a very different course from mine.

On the 18th of March, 1845, he was admitted to holy orders as a deacon in the Church of the Epiphany, Philadelphia, by the Right Rev. Bishop Lee, of Delaware. His own record of it is in his usual frame of mind:—

"*March* 18.—A day ever to be remembered by me, for I have this day been publicly and solemnly ordained to preach the gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Oh that the Lord may impart to me those qualifications which nature and human learning cannot impart! I am truly unworthy and unfit for this high and holy office. Oh that I could feel it more deeply and be more deeply humbled with a sense of it! I cannot say that I am altogether cold and insensible; but yet I have little sense of divine things, compared to what I wish and would strive after. I would look to the Lord, and, relying upon his grace, would endeavour to go forth to do his work. Where my lot is to be cast I know not. The parish I had expected to have has settled another minister. However, I feel no anxiety, but would commit my way entirely to the Lord."

"*March* 19.—Arose this morning in a pleasant frame of mind. Felt some little peace and comfort in my heart. But perhaps it arose as much from an exhilaration of animal spirits as from the divine teaching of the Spirit of Life in my soul. Yet I would be thankful and humble, trusting in the Lord. In the evening went to preach for Rev. Mr. Maxwell, in Kensington. Got through tolerably well. But I had to read my sermon too closely; and, the desk being too high and the lights dim, I was placed in rather disadvantageous circumstances. I think I felt something of the presence of the Lord. Oh that his blessing might descend upon the people! Met there with Mrs. E., the mother of two interesting little boys who were in my Sunday-school. She is going to Russia, and I promised to write to Edward, her oldest son, who is already there."

"*March* 20.—Read the service this morning at the Epiphany. Dr. T. criticized my manner of reading. Hope I shall profit by it, although it seems unpleasant. I was somewhat disheartened, especially in looking forward to Sunday, when I expect to

preach my first sermon in the Epiphany. I trust the Lord will give me grace to be humble. This is what I need and what I have asked for."

"*March* 23, *Sunday*.—Got through this day with scarce any of the fatigue or labour I had apprehended. Every thing has gone on pleasantly, and I have been sustained through every thing which has devolved upon me. Attended morning prayer-meeting at half past six; Bible-class at nine; church at half past ten. Assisted Dr. Tyng in the administration of the Lord's Supper. In the afternoon came my great trial,—my first sermon in the Epiphany. I got through my sermon pretty well, although the close, which I had prepared as a personal address to the people, made me falter. However, I believe it gave my friends satisfaction. And thus the labours of the day are over."

His first appearance in the pulpit of the Epiphany could not but be an occasion of deep interest and anxiety to him, as well as to his friends, among whom he now stood as an ordained minister of Christ. But he need have felt no apprehension. He proved

entirely equal to their expectations, and his preaching gave great satisfaction to those who had so loved and cherished him in his preparation for the work. To his pastor it was an occasion of great satisfaction and joy. Here now was the little umbrella-maker, the faithful young servant of Christ, the earnest and affectionate Sunday-school teacher, the boy who loved his mother, and whom every one else who knew him loved in return, standing up in his pastor's place, an educated and ordained minister, to preach the everlasting gospel. And he did it well in all respects. It was a day of full gratification to the pastor and the church, and an occasion adapted to give much encouragement to the young and to stir up the gift which God might have placed in many a youthful heart.

After a few weeks spent in Philadelphia, where he preached acceptably in several of the churches, Mr. Messinger went to Washington, a town in the western part of Pennsylvania, to minister to a small Episcopal congregation which had been gathered there. Here he held his weekly public service, for a few months, in the hall or chapel of the

college, and entered upon his duties as a pastor with a true and humble spirit. I will allow his journal to describe his place and his works:—

"*May* 1, 1845, *Washington, Pa.*—Just arrived at the scene of my labours and responsibilities. Oh for a heart deeply engaged with a sense of that responsibility! What has brought me to this place? O Lord, I trust I am here by thy direction and guidance. If thou hast brought me here, and if thou hast work for me to do, oh lead me and assist me here, and qualify me for it. What duties and trials are before me I know not as yet. But I would desire and endeavour to rest wholly in the Lord, and commit my way to him, and only ask for grace to be humble, and diligent, and hearty in doing his work. True, indeed, I have sunk very low in my spiritual frame. I mourn over it, and would be low in the dust of humiliation on account of it. But I know the Lord is gracious, and I would look to him for grace to raise me up and quicken me in my own soul, as well as to qualify me for the work he has for me to do. Lord, help me,

and bless me, and give me souls for my hire in this place."

"*May* 4, *Sabbath.*—This may be regarded as the commencement of my ministry, being the first time I ever preached to a people whom I could consider as my own. Had an unfavourable day so far as the weather was concerned, being very rainy; nevertheless the congregation exceeded my expectations in point of numbers. There were present, I think, nearly a hundred people. I preached to them from Acts iv. 20: 'For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.' Went in the afternoon at two o'clock to the Presbyterian church. Our service was held again at four. I preached from St. John i. 29: 'Behold the Lamb of God.' Felt some degree of animation, especially towards the close. The people seemed generally serious and attentive. Oh may the Lord send down his blessing! Paul may plant, and Apollos water, but he alone giveth the increase."

"*June* 1.—One month has now passed away since I came to this place. Think I am able to form some estimate of my situation and prospects here; and my impression

is, they are far from encouraging. There seems to be little prospect of increase in our congregation, the town is so completely preoccupied by other denominations. Perhaps there is not a town in the state better supplied with the gospel than this, and I feel as if I were labouring to very little purpose.

"Called yesterday on old Mrs. C., an aged member of our church, who has been long bedridden. Talked and prayed with her. She seemed to be in a calm and happy frame of mind. Have now got nearly through visiting my people. They are a little flock indeed. Lord, forbid that my ministry to them should be entirely in vain!"

"*June* 8.—Have during the past week found some joy and peace in communion with God—more so, I think, than I have found for a long time past. Sometimes have been depressed on several accounts. My present situation is not altogether to my mind. Found, this morning, some access to God in prayer and some sense of divine things; trusting that the Lord will graciously sustain me, and carry me through the duties of the day. Opened my Sunday-

school, and felt some degree of freedom in addressing the children. In church my great trial came on. Tried to preach extemporaneously from John iv. 14. Felt as if it were a great failure. My thoughts and ideas seemed to have vanished. Stumbled along sadly. Seemed, however, to get a little strength towards the conclusion. Mr. L., our principal vestryman, encouraged me to proceed in this way. Do not know, however, whether I shall have confidence to make another attempt. O Lord, direct and help me! Spent the hour until the time of afternoon service in preparation, studying the sermon I expected to preach. Congregation small, but they seemed attentive. Felt rather fatigued and discouraged by the efforts of the day, especially the morning. Oh, how much have I yet to learn of the difficulties and trials of a minister's life!"

"*June* 22.—Spent the past week much as the previous. Confined pretty closely. Have written two sermons. Spirits at times considerably depressed. Have thought perhaps that the reason God has brought me here to so unpromising a field, and so unsatisfactory a place, is to cure the selfishness and re-

bellion of my heart, and to make me willing to go to Africa. If so, I think I can say, with more anxiety than ever before, 'Here, Lord, am I, send me; only make my way clear.' True, the Lord has never done so yet; on the contrary, his providence has directed me in a different path. But, had he done so, I fear the unwillingness of my heart would have prevented me from going. And I have questioned, whether the Lord, seeing my heart so set, has not brought me here in chastisement, to bring me to a better mind. If it be so, Lord, I submit with thankfulness. Oh, show me what thou wouldst have me to do, and give me grace to do it!"

"*June* 28.—Arrived this day at another of those way-marks which divide my pilgrimage. This day I enter on my thirty-fifth year. This birthday finds me in the ministry. But I do not feel in regard to it now as before I entered the work. I saw not then the trial of faith and patience which it would require. I feel now that nothing but ardent love for Christ and souls can make me comfortable in it. Oh that I had more of this! I am not in circumstances

which at all satisfy me, and feel as if I were labouring to little purpose. Where shall I be, and how shall I be occupied, when another birthday shall come round?"

"*July* 6.—Expressed to Mr. Lee my feelings of discouragement in reference to our prospects as a congregation and a church. He concurs, and thinks the people will agree in my leaving, should I be called to another charge. I leave it all in the Lord's hands. I desire to be found in his ways and doing his will."

On the 26th of July he wrote to his sister, expressing his views upon this depressing subject more fully:—

"You will infer, from what I have just said, that I am about leaving Washington. Such is the fact. I am much disappointed in this place, and should regret having come here, did I not believe that the Lord had a wise design in permitting it. The town is better supplied with the gospel, perhaps, than any other town in the country, and is so completely preoccupied by other denominations that there is no room for our little church to grow. Nor is it needed at all, except to gratify the very few people who

prefer our services. Were it a thriving, growing town, as I had supposed before I came, our prospects would be different. But such is not the case. It is quite stationary, and but for the college it would go backwards. Under these circumstances, I feel as if I were labouring to little or no purpose in preaching to a few people in a town where there is already a church for every two hundred. Under these circumstances, I have resolved to leave and seek a field where there is a better prospect of usefulness. My purpose is to go back to Philadelphia and consult with friends, especially with reference to going to Africa. Our church has a flourishing mission on the west coast, and labourers are very much wanted. An old friend of mine, who has laboured there formerly, returns this fall; and, if the Lord shall so direct, I may go with him. All is uncertain, however, and I wish to refer the whole matter to the Lord, and follow in the way in which he shall guide me. I feel as if I could never be satisfied or comfortable in any other way. My present feeling is, that before I enter any other field I must see if it is not the Lord's will that I

should go to Africa. On this question I can come to no sort of conclusion until I get to Philadelphia."

"*July* 27. — Came to the conclusion the past week to draw up, and present to the vestry, a paper stating my views and feelings with reference to our little church, and asking a release from my engagement with them. Thought of it, and prayed over it, and it seems my best course. My feelings have undergone a complete revolution with respect to the African mission. I now feel that if the Lord will send me I am ready to go. Whether the obstacles which heretofore have seemed to stand in my way can all be removed, I do not know. I would leave it all with the Lord. His providence seems manifestly to point to Africa. He has brought me here, I sometimes think, for the very purpose of turning the current of my thoughts and feelings towards Africa. Had I been placed in other and more pleasant circumstances, I should probably not have thought of it. Moreover, just as I had made up my mind to go, if the Lord should seem thus to direct, I received a letter from Professor Packard, stating that Mr.

H. had been at the seminary, endeavouring to procure one to go out with him this fall. Who can tell but the Lord is thus saying to me, 'Thou art the man'? Oh, if I can feel that this is his good pleasure, I will go willingly and gladly!"

"*August* 12.—Wrote two letters to ask advice respecting my going to Africa. Nothing has yet turned my mind from it. Indeed, it seems to grow in interest as I contemplate it. May the Lord direct me! Sought the Lord in prayer, and found manifest relief. Africa is still constantly before my mind; and the thought of going there for Christ's sake, although I might have to encounter trials in doing it, seemed pleasant. Felt as if I could die with more comfort after having laboured in Africa than after a life spent in any other manner. Still, the letters which I receive give me little satisfaction, and seem to throw the whole burden upon my own conscience and sense of duty. But these preponderate in favour of going."

"*August* 27.—I have been looking over what I recorded at the close of last year respecting my feelings and convictions at

that time. Whether I was perfectly sincere with God and my own heart at that time, in the sentiments I recorded, God only knows. I intended to be. But the Lord, in bringing me here, has brought me to think and feel very differently. I can no longer say that my mind and interest have not been drawn to it, for it has been so most manifestly. The other objections which I recorded still exist. But they can be overcome, if I can feel that I am in the way of the Lord. Casting myself entirely upon him, and setting aside all inclinations and personal preferences, it seems as if he said to me, 'Go, and I will be with thee!' Every objection I commit to him. Whether I live, I would live to him, or whether I die, I would die to him. My life is worth nothing except as I can use it in promoting his glory. My present purpose is to leave Washington and go to Philadelphia, there to inquire what the path of duty is; and, if the Lord seems so to direct, to embark for Africa, as soon as I may be able to make arrangements."

Thus the short ministry of Mr. Messinger in his own country closed. He felt

himself thus guided and prepared to renounce his home and all he had, to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ to a heathen people. It may be that he took quite too discouraging a view of his ministry and prospects at Washington. But, if so, it was not less the Lord's chosen instrument to guide and settle his mind in regard to the great missionary question before him. He was made ready to labour anywhere, but increasing light and conviction seemed to mark his path to Africa; and from the time he offered himself to the work of this foreign mission, he seemed to have no doubt that the Lord was leading him in the way that he had chosen. From this time he devoted himself diligently to prepare for the work he had undertaken. And even when he looked back upon the path, from the hour of death, it was with no feeling of regret or of doubt in regard to the course which he had pursued.

We may trace his course again in his own record:—

"*Saturday, September* 20, 1845.—I am again in Philadelphia. Here I have conversed with my friends about going to

Africa. Every thing seems to indicate that I am to go. The physician thinks that the affection in my back is lumbago, and will interpose no obstacle in my way. Have this morning written to Rev. Mr. Irving, Secretary to the Foreign Committee, offering myself to go. May the Lord guide me aright!"

"*October* 16.—This day received intelligence which decides my future course, and will, perhaps, tell not only upon my whole life in this world, but throughout eternity. Received a letter from Rev. Mr. Irving, announcing my appointment as a missionary to Western Africa. Although I have for some time past been expecting this result of my application, yet the announcement produces a very solemn impression. I cannot but think that the hand of the Lord is thus directing my way; and I do not regret the determination which I have heretofore made of going to Africa if the Lord should open the way before me. Yet, when it comes to the point which positively decides that I am to go, there is something of a painful feeling which arises within me at the idea of forsaking my na-

tive land and breaking up all the pleasant associations I have heretofore formed. Oh that the breaking of earthly ties and connections, and the sacrifice of that which is pleasant in earthly things, may be the means of drawing me nearer heaven and weaning my affections from the world to things above! Alas! the world has too strong a hold upon me. I have much worldliness and pride and vanity to be subdued. And, perhaps, going to Africa will be the very way to subdue it; for there I shall be likely to find little that is inviting in a worldly view. May the grace of God be effectual in me to produce this result, so that my great happiness shall be derived from the service of the Lord and the consciousness of his favour, and not from the gratification of worldly tempers and dispositions! The time of my departure seems to be near at hand, leaving me very little time in which to prepare. A vessel is expected to sail in two weeks, in which it is desirable that I should go if possible, so that I shall be pressed for time. Yet I am determined to be ready; for the sooner I

can reach the place of my destination the better."

"*Sabbath, October* 19.—Visited our Sunday-schools at the Epiphany, and talked a little to the children. May the Lord bless all these dear children! It is very gratifying to me to know that I shall be in a great measure supported by them in my missionary work in Africa."

In the autumn of 1845, the Rev. Alonzo Potter, D.D., was consecrated the Bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Pennsylvania; and to him the succeeding reference is made, equally honouring the fidelity of the superior, and the meekness of the inferior, in the ministry of the church of Christ.

"*October* 25.—Received yesterday a note from our new bishop. He has lately visited Washington, which I had left, and has there heard expressions of much dissatisfaction with me for leaving them. His note contains a serious admonition to me. He thinks I was actuated by hastiness and impatience of spirit, which I must put under some control, or it will greatly impede my future usefulness. I cannot but honour

and esteem him for his faithfulness, notwithstanding his admonition has caused me much uneasiness of feeling because I seem to him to have deserved such a rebuke. The Lord knows all the motives and feelings which actuated me. May he forgive me if I have done wrong and give me grace to guide me aright in time to come! It is some comfort to me that my own conscience does not reproach me in the course which I have pursued, and also that it has the unanimous approbation of my friends here. Yet I am distressed at the idea of having given the people of Washington occasion to think hardly of me. I have sometimes wished for their sakes I had never gone among them. Had I first visited the place, it might have saved them much disappointment and me much sorrow; but then, probably, I should not have thought of going to Africa. The Lord in this has chastened me, to bring me into the way of duty, as he did Jonah when he fled to Tarshish instead of going to Nineveh. Had I not at first yielded too much to inclination in deciding against going to Africa, it might have saved the whole. Let

me learn from past experience to hold myself in readiness to go whithersoever the Lord shall direct, and whether it crosses my inclination or not. I believe this is the only way to be comfortable and happy in the ministry."

We cannot but honour such a spirit, and perceive plainly how graciously God had been leading him and sanctifying him for his own service and glory. The time now arrived for his departure to Africa; and he was wholly occupied in making preparations for his voyage.

CHAPTER X.

MISSIONARY LIFE IN AFRICA.

All things having been prepared for his entrance upon his work, so far as his appointment and his own entire determination were concerned, his next object was to obtain his ordination as a presbyter in the church to which he belonged. The Rt. Rev. Bishop Lee, of Delaware, who had ordained him as a deacon, was also prepared, and desired by the Bishop of Pennsylvania, to give him orders as priest. For this purpose he went to Delaware on Thursday, the 6th of November. He met Bishop Lee in Georgetown, Delaware, where he was ordained on Saturday, the 8th of November, 1845. On Sunday he preached in the church at Georgetown, and returned again to Philadelphia. Here he remained, accomplishing his final preparations, until the 14th, when he finally departed for Baltimore, where he was to embark for Africa.

On the 13th of November he addressed the following letter to his brother. It is a most affectionate and impressive farewell to his beloved relatives. It shows his whole heart to be in the work on which he was entering, and is an interesting testimony to his affectionate and truly Christian relations, —to those with whom he was most nearly connected on the earth.

"I have just time to write you a few lines. I have left Washington, and am about to sail for Cape Palmas, Western Africa. I had hoped to visit old Massachusetts once more before going. But I have been so much pressed for time as to find it quite out of my power. The vessel in which I am to sail leaves Baltimore on the 15th of the present month, and I have been much hurried in order to get ready for it. I leave Philadelphia to-morrow morning. Perhaps I may never see it again. This, however, is all in the Lord's hands. He has so manifestly directed my way to Africa, as a field of labour, that I cannot see the least reason to doubt that it is the path of duty for me. I do not know that I ever informed you that my attention was strongly turned to Africa

nearly two years since. I had, however, laid aside all thought of going until during the past summer, when my mind has been drawn again in the same direction, and now the Lord seems to have made my way clear, and every thing seems to say to me, *Go.* I trust, my dear brother, that your prayers and those of your wife will accompany me, and sustain me in the arduous work of a missionary. I know not what toils and trials are before me. But I can cheerfully commit myself into the Lord's hands, and trust that he will give me grace sufficient for every time of need. Farewell, my dear brother; I trust we shall meet again in this world. But, if not, may we meet in a better!"

His journal proceeds to give us a full account of his movements:—

"*Saturday, November* 15, *Brig Kent, Baltimore harbour.*—The past two weeks have been a scene of hurry and bustle beyond any thing to which I have been accustomed. I succeeded, however, in getting through all my preparations, and have now embarked for Africa. In the midst of this hurry and excitement, have sunk much in spiritual

things. Devotional exercises often irregular and hurried from the pressure of circumstances. But I trust this is now over. On Thursday, November 6, I went to Georgetown, Delaware, to meet Bishop Lee. On Saturday morning was ordained to priests' orders in St. Paul's Church, by Bishop Lee. On Sunday I preached there from Revelations iii. 20: 'Behold, I stand at the door and knock,' &c. Congregation small, but very attentive. May the Lord graciously follow with his blessing! And now that I am about to commence my missionary life, may the Lord bestow his grace upon me, to make me diligent and faithful! Propose to keep a daily journal. Our accommodations on board the vessel are very much cramped. Cabin very small, and filled up with stores. However, I feel contented and cheerful, and think I can put up with the accommodations, poor as they are. Oh that I may now have the love of Christ shed abroad in my heart, and thus be sweetly constrained to the discharge of duty!

"*Saturday evening.*—Vessel all in confusion. Spent the time partly in reading, and partly in walking the deck for exercise, and

occasionally conversing with the people on board. Our captain seems to be a well-disposed man, although not pious. Have had some conversation with him on the subject of religion, about which he is very ready to talk. Have become slightly acquainted with one or two of the emigrants, and have read two letters for them from their friends, giving them good and pious counsel. Some of them seem to be religiously disposed, and I have formed a favourable opinion of them generally, although my knowledge of them is yet too slight to form any judgment in which I can confide. May the Lord guide me in all things, and teach me, and enable me to do them good!

"*Sabbath, November* 16.—A dull and unsatisfactory day. In the morning there was a raw, chilly, southwest wind blowing very strongly. The vessel rolled considerably. Weather so uncomfortable, and deck so full of lumber, that I thought it inexpedient to assemble the people for worship, as I should otherwise have felt it my duty to do. Indeed, I was myself so benumbed with the weather that I should have been but poorly able to talk with them. No fire in the cabin,

nor any comfortable place to sit. In the course of the morning, the mate came to me, asking some questions about my goods. I gave him to understand that, as it was Sunday, I did not wish to attend to such matters until to-morrow. He apologized by saying that in the confusion of getting out of port he had quite forgotten that it was the Sabbath. He seemed anxious that I should understand that he was not disposed unnecessarily to violate the Sabbath. Both the captain and himself seem quite ready, as far as circumstances will permit, to accommodate matters to my views and feelings as a Christian and a minister of the gospel. I opened a bundle of tracts, and laid out several on the cabin-table. The captain has occupied much of his leisure time in reading them. In the afternoon the weather became more calm and mild. Towards evening had the people assembled on deck, and conducted evening worship, in which they seemed ready to engage. Several of the emigrants, I learn, are professors of religion, mostly, I believe, in the Baptist connection."

The 18th of November is the date of the last record in his journal until his arrival in

Africa. They had then just cleared the Chesapeake Bay, and were out upon the ocean. For fifty-seven days he passed an uncomfortable passage, and his journal and his public efforts to do good to the people on board were both laid aside, from his inability to attend to either.

They arrived off the coast of Africa on the 11th of January, 1846. The next day we find his journal again opened:—

"*Monday, January* 12. *Off Monrovia.*—Here we arrived yesterday afternoon, after a most boisterous and uncomfortable passage. Little did I anticipate, at the time of making my last record, what I should have to endure on the passage. I had intended to keep a daily journal; but that was quite out of the question. This is the first time I have been able to write since we left Cape Henry. We passed out of the Cape on Wednesday, November 19, with a fine wind, which continued blowing fresh for three or four days. On the following Monday a succession of gales set in, which blew almost continuously for three weeks. What I suffered during this time I cannot attempt to describe. On Monday, December 7, the captain ordered

the deck-load to be thrown overboard, which lightened the vessel much. We owe much to having a strong vessel.

"In six weeks we made the west end of St. Anthony, the most western of the Cape de Verd Islands. How grateful to me was the sight of land once more! As I gazed upon the island at a distance, peering up in lofty peaks far above the horizon, I thought it was one of the grandest sights I had ever witnessed. When we came up to it, however, I was disappointed in its appearance. The west end, off which we were becalmed for twenty-four hours, is a lofty promontory, rising majestically above the clouds, but so barren as to be utterly destitute of vegetation. Not the slightest appearance either of animal or vegetable life was to be seen; but a solemn, deathlike stillness reigned over all the parts we saw. One day from St. Anthony, we passed St. Jago, where we were becalmed again for sixteen hours. After leaving St. Jago, we had quite pleasant weather up to the time of our arrival at this place, yesterday afternoon.

"Such have been the circumstances in which I have been placed that I was utterly

unable to carry out the purpose I had formed respecting the emigrants. Every Sunday except the last has been rough and unpleasant. I have not attempted to preach to them at all. On the morning of Christmas day, I received a request from some of them to conduct prayers with them, which I have done regularly, morning and evening, until within a few days. At these exercises we have had singing and prayer, and a portion of Scripture, with such practical and explanatory remarks as were suggested at the moment. After our morning exercises, I spent about an hour in instructing such as desired it in the elements of reading and arithmetic. Most of them were extremely ignorant. Had many religious conversations with the captain. There seemed but little opportunity or prospect of any religious impression.

"After all the inconveniences and discomforts of the voyage, I have arrived here in good health, and no worse for what I have suffered. Perhaps I am better for the trial of faith and patience which I have experienced. May the Lord grant me grace to profit by it! I would with thankfulness

set up my memorial, and call upon my soul, and all that is within me, to bless the Lord for all his goodness.

"As soon as we came up yesterday, two boats, with about a dozen kroomen, came alongside. The appearance of the men was savage; yet they had fine countenances and forms, and I thought them altogether the best-looking specimens of the coloured race I had ever seen. In about an hour after we had come to anchor, the captain ordered out our boat, and, it being manned with kroomen, we put ashore. We walked up to the town. Afternoon service was out shortly after our arrival, and we had a fine opportunity to see the people as they returned from church. There were many well-dressed and fine-looking people among them. But intermingled with them were seen the natives running about almost naked, forming altogether a motley group. The town has a very rural appearance. The streets are green causeways, with a footpath in the middle. The foliage of the trees is most luxuriant. Almost every thing which a tropical clime produces grows here in abundance. I was highly pleased with the

appearance of the town, and it surpassed all the conceptions I had formed of it. Went in company with the Rev. Mr. Wilson, a coloured minister, to call upon the missionaries who came in the Roanoke. They appear to be pleasantly situated. Spent about a half hour very pleasantly, and then returned with the captain to the vessel, highly gratified with the first appearance of Africa and the prospect thus afforded of my future field of labour.

"Arose this morning early. Occupied much time in writing. Went on shore about twelve. Methodist Conference in session. Attended by invitation, and was introduced by the superintendent, who is one of the missionaries whom I saw yesterday. We are all brethren here, engaged in the same work of preaching the gospel. I trust I shall ever regard Christians of all denominations who hold the essentials of the gospel, and preach it faithfully, as brethren in a common cause."

"*Tuesday*, *January* 13.—Weather excessively warm. Went on shore with the kroomen, who were employed in getting water. Landed on the sand-beach below the town,

which I proposed to reach by going round the cape to the southern beach, to which a path from the town extended. But, after proceeding for a little way over the sand, I found the beach covered with large stones and rocks made wet and slippery by the dashing of the surf. Got very warm, and feared I had been imprudent. To clamber over these stones I found difficult and laborious; so I returned back and went to the town by the usual route. I had chosen the worst part of the day for walking, between the land and sea breeze, when there was but little air stirring. In the afternoon I sauntered out to take a survey of the town. It does not come up to the impression I first formed. The houses are mostly mean and shabby, and there is an appearance of wildness and neglect about the gardens and grounds. There seems to be among the colonists generally a great want of energy and industry. This is acknowledged and lamented by some of the more intelligent. Much allowance must be made for the debilitating effects of the climate; but, after all, they exhibit but too sad evidences of the state of degradation from which they have

been brought, and it will take probably two or three generations to bring them up to the state of an intelligent and enterprising community."

"*Sunday, January* 18.—Arrived at Cape Palmas this morning. We had on board a large accession of passengers. On landing, I went to the house of Dr. McGill, the physician of the place, where I dined, was introduced to the governor, who kindly furnished me a mule, on which I rode, in company with Dr. McGill, to Mount Vaughan, where I arrived about four o'clock in the afternoon.

"Thus the Lord has graciously brought me to the place of my destination, after a long trial of faith and patience. What awaits me here, either in doing or learning the Lord's will, is known only to him. Oh that I may have faith to trust him for grace to sustain me in every trial! I would cast myself upon him, and pray that I may be enabled to glorify him and be made instrumental in bringing many souls into his kingdom.

"Only Mr. and Mrs. Appleby remain at Mount Vaughan. Was disappointed in the

appearance of the place. It seemed almost deserted. The buildings are dilapidated, and every thing has a desolate appearance. The children have been mostly taken away from here; and this is little more at present than a kind of storehouse for the Mission.

"*Monday, January* 19.—Spent some time in prayer, meditation, and reading the Scripture. Found more comfort and pleasure in these exercises than I have for a long time. What a work I have here before me! I have need to use double diligence to redeem the time. How poorly qualified for it do I find myself, both mentally and spiritually! Graciously quicken me, O Lord, and prepare me for the work thou hast for me to do. Walked into the colony after breakfast. Met Dr. Savage and Mr. Payne, who welcomed me to Africa with much cordiality. Spent the remainder of the day in unpacking my baggage and in conversation with the brethren.

"*Tuesday, January* 20.—The Lord has been gracious to me thus far. Oh that I may be enabled to serve him with cheerful-

ness, alacrity, and holy zeal! Dr. Savage and Mr. Payne spent the night here. This morning held a meeting of the Mission. The subject of my future field was spoken of, though nothing definite can be determined now.

"After the departure of the brethren, spent the remainder of the day in writing letters. In the evening, Mr. Appleby had a meeting of the colonists from the neighbourhood. About twenty were present. I conducted the meeting, at his request. Talked to them from the 16th chapter of Acts, about the jailer at Philippi. They seemed interested. It was a pleasant and interesting meeting to me. Was enabled to speak with much ease and freedom. Oh for grace to make me useful to the people of this land!

"*Wednesday*, *January* 21.—The Lord has thus far graciously preserved my health. Feel cheerful and contented. The appearance of things about Mount Vaughan seems to improve upon acquaintance. Went into town this morning. Stopped on the way to see some emigrants who came with me. They appear cheerful and contented, and

express themselves pleased with the place. They wish to write to their friends, and I have about a dozen letters to write for them."

"*Saturday, January* 24.—This closes up my second week in Africa. Thus far I am well pleased. My health good, and my spirits cheerful. I would that I could say, my soul lively. But, alas! this is not the case in any thing like the degree which I desire and ought to possess.

"*Sunday, January* 25.—My first quiet Sabbath in Africa. Arose in the morning in a calm and cheerful frame of mind. Our worship was at eleven o'clock. Quite a large congregation for the place was in attendance, among whom were the governor and his family, and the captain of an English vessel lying in the harbour. Preached from John iv. 13 and 14. May the Lord add his blessing! People mostly seemed serious and attentive. Spent the evening mostly in conversation. It has been in many respects a pleasant and interesting Sabbath.

"*Monday, January* 26.—Had some slight symptoms of fever. They, however, passed off in the following night.

"*Tuesday, January* 27.—I was perfectly well again. About noon Dr. Perkins arrived, and soon after Dr. Savage, both of whom passed the remainder of the day and night at Mount Vaughan. The latter had heard of my indisposition, and felt some anxiety about me.

"On Wednesday, 28th, I accompanied Dr. S. to Fishtown, where I arrived towards night, and where I expect to remain until I have passed through the acclimating fever. This is the station of Dr. Savage. He has about forty native children under his care. All were anxious to see the new missionary. Several of them profess to have been converted by the Holy Spirit to a love of Christ, and others appear to be impressed with the truth. In the evening, Dr. S. held a meeting with the elder and more intelligent. It was to me a most interesting sight to see native boys, some of them quite young, come in and kneel in silent prayer before taking their seats. How many youths in Christian lands would they put to shame! The meeting was solemn and impressive.

"This morning the governor of the town

and the chief war-man called to see me. Had some religious conversation with the governor through Samuel Boyd, one of the schoolboys, who interpreted for me. The governor is an old man, very unprepossessing in his appearance. He expressed himself very glad and thankful that missionaries had come to teach his people the word of God, and hoped they would all believe it and receive it into their hearts. In the evening, the worship for the children was conducted in the boys' schoolroom. At his request, I made a few remarks to the children. The whole of the exercises seemed sweetly solemn, and I felt as if the Lord was in this place of a truth."

"*Saturday*, *January* 31.—Through the goodness of God I am brought to the close of another week, in the full enjoyment of health. How much longer this will be the case is known only to Him; but while it lasts I would bless and praise him for such mercy. Oh for a heart to love him more and serve him better. I feel as I were doing very little now. Next week I hope, if the Lord permit, to have something to do in the school."

Thus he continued his daily record, with but little variety of incident. His health appeared to be good, and the prospects of his usefulness in the mission were promising. On the 18th of February he records:—

"Went this afternoon to preach in the native town, accompanied by Samuel Boyd as interpreter. Had an assemblage of between twenty and thirty persons, and a large number of children, who were a little noisy at times. The house where I was to have preached was so full of smoke that I was obliged to sit outside. Nothing worthy of special note occurred. I told them, at parting, that I hoped they would keep the word in their hearts. Their answer was, they would try."

"*Friday, February* 20.—A fire occurred in the native town to-day, which swept away upwards of twenty of their little houses before its progress could be arrested. Dr. Savage and all our workmen and schoolboys were on the ground, and but for them the ravages of the fire would probably have been much more extensive, as the natives manifest no kind of energy or presence of mind on such occasions. The mission build-

ings were mercifully preserved, owing to the direction of the wind. Many of the natives were thrown out of house and home, and seemed to be in great distress. Although the doctor advised me not to go to the fire, yet I could not refrain from it, though I did little more than walk about, and now and then offer suggestions as to the best manner of arresting its progress. After it was over, there was much rejoicing manifested, by firing guns, by those whose houses had escaped the conflagration; and we heard of fowls being sacrificed to the devil as a manifestation of gratitude for preservation. Oh that they might be brought to a saving knowledge of Him from whom all mercies come!"

Thus his brief journal in Africa closes. On the 25th of January, he addressed a letter to the committee for foreign missions, giving an account of his voyage and of his labours up to that time.

"Notwithstanding all the discomforts of the passage," he says, "I feel that I have great cause for gratitude to God, that, now it is all over, I do not find that I am any the worse for it; and I can only desire that my

life and health, thus mercifully preserved, may be devoted to his service and glory in this land of darkness. Perhaps the Lord designed it as a trial of faith and patience, in order thereby to prepare me for greater usefulness. I would fain so regard it, and endeavour to improve it as such.

"I have, as yet, had so little time and opportunity to look around me that I am hardly prepared to express any thing in regard to the impression made upon my mind by the first sight of Africa. I think I can say, however, that I am in nowise disappointed in any of the expectations I had formed. Indeed, my expectations are rather exceeded than otherwise; and I look forward with pleasing anticipations, and newly-awakened interest, to the prospect of usefulness here opened before me."

On the 23d of February, he thus wrote to the children of the Sunday-schools of the church of the Epiphany, Philadelphia:—

"My dear young friends:—

"You will perceive that this letter is written at Fishtown, which is the station of Dr. Savage. I am staying with him until

I become acclimated—that is, until I have become accustomed to the climate; for you must know, when any one comes to live in Africa, the change of climate is expected to make him sick at first, and it is some time before he becomes so accustomed to the climate that he can live in it without being ill, more or less. And this is what they mean by being acclimated. But, although I have been here now nearly six weeks, I have not been sick at all yet, and do not feel as if I were likely to be. I know that sickness and death are in the Lord's hands. And this is true not only in Africa, but everywhere else. The doctor encourages me by saying that he thinks my constitution is well adapted to the African climate. But he says I must stay with him two months, and, if I do not get sick in that time, I may go where I please. I shall then probably go to visit other stations before I become fixed in any one place; and in my future letters I shall try to give you some account of each one. There are five stations in all, some of them twelve, some twenty, and some forty, miles from the Cape. The missionaries go back and forth from one to the

other, sometimes on horseback, sometimes on foot, or in a hammock carried by men, or in canoes by sea. It is quite a long journey to visit some of the stations, and probably it will be some time before I shall be able to see them all. There are no railroads in Africa, and it is not so easy to travel here as at home.

"In the present letter I will tell you something about the place where I am now staying. Fishtown is a large native town, or rather cluster of three towns, situated on a point of land which extends far out into the sea, about twelve miles north of Cape Palmas. Just above the town, the sea forms a very beautiful bay, where the natives are frequently seen gliding about in their canoes. Dr. Savage's house is just outside the town, and fronts on this bay. It is very pleasantly situated, a short distance from the beach, on a little rising ground, and commands a fine view of the sea. He has a school of about twenty boys and fifteen girls, most of whom belong to the native town here. But they all live on the mission premises, and are permitted to visit their homes occasionally. The people are generally willing and

glad to have their children come to the mission school, although there are some who feel otherwise. I think I have never seen a more orderly and well-behaved set of children than those in Dr. Savage's school, and it seems to me that they would put to shame many day and Sunday-schools in our own country. Every morning and evening they are assembled for worship in the schoolroom. In the morning the native teacher conducts the exercises, and in the evening Dr. Savage or I conduct them and make a short address to the children; and I have never on these occasions seen the slightest appearance of disorder of any kind. Most of them seem to be deeply attentive and interested in the exercises, although many of them do not yet know enough of English to understand fully what is said. These addresses are translated into the native language by one who understands the English, so that all are benefited.

"The first night I spent at Dr. Savage's was what he calls his lecture-night, when all the older and more intelligent children are assembled for a kind of lecture or familiar address from him. And you may

think what an interesting sight it was to see the boys come in their native dress, and kneel down and engage in silent prayer before taking their seats. Oh, it made me feel strangely! From their dress and appearance I should have thought myself in a company of heathen children. But to see them upon their knees in prayer made me feel as if I was in a company of Christian children, such as I had never seen before. I thought of some of our Sunday-schools. Yes, dear children, I thought of you. How many of you are there who go to lecture or to the prayer-meeting, and, before taking your seats, kneel down and ask the blessing of God in silent prayer? Ah, take care, dear young friends, that the heathen children of Africa do not rise up in judgment with you and condemn you.

"But perhaps you will think that they do this because they are taught and are required to do it. I thought myself that this might be the case, and on inquiry I was told that this was not so, but they did it entirely of their own accord. Every Sunday afternoon they are formed into a Sunday-school. I sometimes go in and talk to them a little

while, and their orderly conduct and serious attention to what is said make it pleasant to do so. I once told them about our schools at home, and how you had sent me out to be a missionary to them, at which they seemed to be much pleased and interested. They are very fond of singing; and the hymn

'Oh that will be joyful,'

which I have been trying to teach them, has become quite a favourite with them.

"But I suppose you will be interested to hear about some of the children more particularly. Although there are none in Dr. Savage's school supported by our church, yet there are some, I dare say, you will be pleased to hear about; so I will tell you about a few of them. The doctor's oldest boy is Samuel Boyd. His native name is Minleh. He has been in the mission school several years, and has now grown up to be a young man, and Dr. Savage intends soon to make him a teacher, and give him a school in the native town. Samuel has been for a long time a member of the church, and has given every reason to hope that he is truly a good and pious young man, and bids fair

to be very useful among his people. He acts as the doctor's interpreter whenever he goes to preach in the native towns, and is sometimes employed also in teaching the school. He seems to be highly esteemed by all who know him. There are two other large boys in the school from Rocktown, which is between Fishtown and Cape Palmas. They were both with Dr. Savage at Mount Vaughan; but when he removed to Fishtown it was some time before he was ready to receive them again, and the boys went home for a time. When the doctor was ready to receive them, the father of one would not permit his son to return, but wished to keep him at home. But the boy was so anxious to get to the mission school again, that he ran away from his father and returned to the doctor. His father was quite displeased at first, and wanted the doctor to send him home again. But the doctor went to see the man, and after a long time he finally consented to let his son stay. This boy's name is William Henry Harrison. He has always been a remarkably good and obedient boy in school. He thinks the Lord has changed his heart, and Dr. Savage has

great hopes of him. The other boy is a very good boy also. He is very much afraid that his friends at home will try to take him from school. And whenever he goes past the town where they live, as he sometimes does when he is sent to Cape Palmas, he hurries on for fear of being stopped and kept at home. Another boy who is a fine promising lad is James May. James is about thirteen years old. His native name is Tahneh. His parents live at Fishtown, and rank as very respectable people in the town. I met James at Cape Palmas before I came to him with Dr. Savage. When he was first introduced to me, I told him something about Dr. May, for whom he was named, and whom he knew very well; and he seemed to be much pleased to hear about him. James thinks the Lord has given him a new heart, and gives Dr. Savage great encouragement to hope that it is really so. The doctor told me that some time ago James came to him with the big tears rolling down his cheeks, and begged that he would pray for him. 'Why,' says the doctor, 'what is the matter?' 'Oh,' said he, 'my sins lie heavy on my heart.' Ever since that time he has

been so good a boy that the doctor hopes his heart is really new. He is in the first class in school, and, although much younger than some of the others, he is one of the most intelligent boys the doctor has.

"Another boy I must mention is Alonzo Potter. Alonzo is about twelve years old, and appears to be a very fine, amiable boy. He cannot speak English yet, so I have not been able to talk with him. His parents live in Fishtown, and are about the best-looking native people I have seen. Alonzo's native name is Keemoo. There is something in his appearance and manners that interests me very much, and I trust he will grow up to be a useful and good man.

"Another fine, interesting little boy is John Farr. John is a little boy about eight or ten years old. His native name is Tibbah. His father lives at Cape Palmas, and was for a long time connected with the Rev. Mr. Wilson's mission, and has long since given up worshipping idols, although I am sorry to say he does not appear to be a Christian. Yet he is very willing his children should attend the mission school. Lit-

tle John has one of the brightest and most interesting countenances I think I have ever seen in Africa. He cannot speak English well, and consequently I cannot talk with him; but his appearance and manners are very pleasing, and, like those of the last-named boy, interest me very much.

"One more little boy I must tell you about, and that is Richard Newton. He is a very little boy, about six or eight years old. His native name is Worroh. When he was first introduced to me, I was told he was the little prince; but you must not imagine he was dressed in gold and trinkets because I tell you he is a prince. He wore a plain, blue frock, just like the other little boys in the mission school, without any thing to distinguish him from the rest; and yet he is as really a prince as the little Prince Albert Edward in England. His father is the king of the Fishtown district. Little Richard is quite a remarkable child. Although he has not been in the school above seven or eight months, and cannot yet speak English, he has learned to read quite well in the Testament, although unable to understand the

meaning of the words. The other day, the king, his father, came in, as the parents of the children very frequently do, and he called Richard to his side to hear him read. The little boy went with his Testament in his hand, and you may suppose what a pleasing sight it was to see a little boy, six or eight years old, reading the Testament to his heathen father. The way the doctor came to have this little boy in his school is quite interesting. One time the doctor was out, engaged in some kind of business with a number of the men of the town, among whom was the king and his little son; and while they were sitting together the little boy left his father and came and sat down beside the doctor. The doctor was interested in his appearance, and said something to him about coming to his school, and from that time the idea of going to school seemed to fill the little boy's mind, and he teased his father until he was obliged to bring him; and, although he was much younger than those the doctor was accustomed to receive, yet such was his anxiety to come that the doctor was induced to take him.

"Are there not those of my little friends at home who will pray that this little prince may grow up to be a Christian king, and turn his people away from their foolish idols to love and serve God? Who can tell how much this little boy may do if he grows up with a heart to serve the Lord? There are also many very fine girls in Dr. Savage's school, but I have not become so well acquainted with them as with the boys.

"I will only mention one of whom I have heard Mrs. Savage speak as a very excellent little girl. Her name is Ellen May. She is about twelve or thirteen years old. Mrs. Savage, who has the principal charge of the girls, seems to put great confidence in Ellen, and sometimes, when she goes to visit the native town, takes her to interpret for her; and she is very useful to Mrs. Savage in various ways. I am unable to say whether Ellen professes to have a new heart or not. All the girls seem to be very serious and attentive to religious instruction. I could speak of a great many other children, but it would make my letter too long. It is a very encouraging circum-

stance that many of the children in Dr. Savage's school belong to the first families in the town, and it is to be hoped, when these children grow up, they will exert a very great influence for good. I think the chief hope of doing good to the African people is by educating the children. The grown-up people often say that they are too old to turn away from the habits and the religion of their forefathers, but the missionary may take their children and teach them '*white man's fashion*,' and when they grow up they will follow it; and they seem very willing that this should be the case, and appear to feel fully sensible that it will be far better for them than if they grow up in ignorance and heathenism.

"But I have written you a very long letter, and I think it is now time to stop. As soon as I can find opportunity, I shall try to write again, and I hope by that time I shall be able to tell you something about the children in whom you are more particularly interested; and in the mean time I hope none of you will forget Africa."

On the 5th of March he wrote another

letter to the Sabbath-schools of the Church of the Epiphany, as follows:—

"This morning an occurrence took place which interested me exceedingly. Some few weeks since, a boy about twelve or thirteen years old came to Dr. Savage from Rocktown, and desired to enter his school. Upon questioning the boy, the doctor ascertained that he had run away from home and come to school without permission from his parents. His practice, however, in such cases, is to receive the children, and keep them until their parents or friends come for them, and then endeavour to persuade them to let them stay; for it is commonly the case, that although the boys run away from home, yet their parents know well where they have gone, and will either come or send for them to return. The boy was consequently received, and has been with the doctor ever since, and has appeared to be an amiable, well-disposed boy.

"This morning, immediately after prayers, the boy came into the house, evidently much alarmed, and said that his friends had come to take him away. 'Well,' said the doctor, 'do you want to go?' The boy answered

'No!' with much apparent earnestness. The doctor then went to see the man who had come for him. He had seated himself in the 'native-house,' (a room, one side appropriated to the reception of the natives, into which they can come at any hour of the day.) In the mean time, the boy had retired to the piazza on the opposite side of the house, evidently to conceal himself from his relatives.

"The doctor found that the man who had come for him was his uncle, acting in the capacity of father, the boy's own father being dead. The man stated that the boy had run away, and he had come to take him back. The doctor observed that the boy had done very wrong in running away, and that he disapproved of such conduct very much; but, as the boy's heart seemed to have come up strong for book, (an idiom of their language,) he thought it would now be best to let him stay. The man replied that this was the only boy he had, and, it being farm-cutting season, he would have no one to carry back and forth his bill-hook, (an instrument for cutting down bushes,) help him make his farm, nor to do any *little work.*

'Well,' said the doctor, 'but now, as his heart is all for book-side, (another idiom,) suppose you take him away; his heart will not sit down, (idiomatic;) he will run away again; so you had better let him stay.' The man answered that he thought he could keep him at home. 'But how will you keep him?' says the doctor; 'has he not run away once? and why will he not run away again?' The man did not seem prepared to say how he would keep him, and hardly to know what answer to give, but seemed determined to take the boy away. The doctor then again said it was true the boy had done wrong in running away, and that he disapproved of it very much. He taught all the children in his school that they must love and honour their parents; but that he had always found in Africa, that when a boy's heart was set upon book his parents could not keep him at home, and it was no use to try; 'but more,' said he, 'if the boy stays in school and learns book, and God's word, then he will learn to do right and to love his parents and relatives; and then, if God should give him that new heart which we teach all the children they must have, he

will come up a good man for his family, a good man for his time, and a good man for his country, and this is what we desire him to be.' The doctor was now called away to attend to something else, and left the man to himself, who still seemed determined not to leave the boy. After a while the doctor returned, and sat down to talk with the man again, and went over with pretty much the same arguments again in answer to the same objections. At length the man began to get tired of his objections, and finally gave his consent to the boy's staying in school. 'Well, now,' says the doctor, 'suppose you give me "a book" for the boy, and then that book will always speak one—a true one.' What is meant by *giving book* is to sign a paper giving up the boy to be educated in the mission school. The man consented, and the doctor drew up a paper to that effect, which the man signed by attaching a *mark* to his name, written by the doctor. But the whole difficulty was not yet settled; for, just as the man had signed the paper, the boy's mother came in, having followed the man and just arrived; and now the whole palaver (talk) must be gone through

again, she having an equal, a superior, right to that of the man, being his mother, and equally unwilling to leave the boy. The doctor told her, as he had told the man, that it was bad in the boy to run away from her; that he ought to love and obey her; but now, as his heart was 'all for book,' she had better let him stay. She made similar objections to those of the man. She had no boy to catch fish for her, no boy to run on errands for her, and she could not spare him. The doctor told her that he had heard plenty of people say the same thing, but after a while, when they found how much good it did their children to come to school and learn book, they were glad they had given them up. After a while, the woman also gave her consent that the boy should stay, and gave book for him, just as the man had done. But now came the most affecting part of the whole scene. After they had both signed the paper, the boy was called in. He came with great reluctance, apparently still afraid he was going to be taken away. The doctor encouraged him by telling him that his relatives had consented to let him stay. When he came into the

presence of his uncle and mother, he hung down his head, seeming to be half-ashamed that he had run away from them, and half-afraid that they were going to take him back again. The doctor now addressed him, and told him he had done a bad thing in running away from his mother and uncle, but now he had been talking with them, and they had been so kind as to consent to let him stay, notwithstanding his bad conduct towards them; and now he must love them, and try in future to be a good son, and thus make up for his past faults. He then called on the mother to take her son and put his hand in his, thus committing him to his care. But this seemed almost too much for the mother, and there was evidently a great struggle in her feelings. The idea of giving up her boy, his desire to leave her and stay at school, and perhaps other considerations, rose up in her mind and seemed almost to overcome her. She rose to do as the doctor had requested, but hesitated, and turned her head aside and brushed away the tears. At length she summoned resolution, and, stepping forward, seized the boy's hand and placed it in the doctor's without speaking a

word, and thus the boy was formally given up to the doctor to be educated in the mission school. The doctor then promised that he would be a father to the boy, and that Mrs. Savage would be a mother to him. The mother and uncle then each received a small present from the doctor, shook hands, and departed, apparently satisfied and pleased; and thus the whole affair was settled, or, in the idiom of the natives, the *palaver was set.*

"I was a spectator of the whole scene, and nothing I have witnessed in Africa has interested me so much; and, thinking the account of it would be interesting to the children of our Sabbath-school at home, I have been thus particular in writing it out, with the design of sending it home. The doctor has named the boy Legh Richmond, and he is now a beneficiary of some Sabbath-school in the United States. May the Lord bless the instruction he receives, and cause him to grow up a man of God, like the one whose name he bears!"

The following letter is supposed to have been addressed to a particular class of boys in one of the schools in which he had been

engaged as a teacher, in Philadelphia, probably the institution of Mr. James:—

"My dear young Friends:—

"I have been, for some time past, intending to write you a letter, in order to have it ready against an opportunity occurs of sending it. And, although it will not reach you until long after the date, yet, from this distant region, I suppose it will not be the less interesting on that account. Although with many of you I have little or no personal acquaintance, yet I suppose you will all be interested to hear from a missionary in Africa, who was once a teacher in your school. Often do I think of the many pleasant years I spent in the institution of which you are members, and, should I ever be permitted to return to my native land, I shall hope to find those with whom I was formerly associated there occupying stations of respectability and usefulness. Boys like you, enjoying all the privileges and advantages you possess, can scarcely be capable of appreciating them in their full value while in the midst of them. Were you to go out into a heathen land, and witness the state

of ignorance and degradation in which youth grow up, you might then be able to form some just estimate of the happiness of your lot, cast as it is in the midst of a civilized, enlightened, and Christian land. However, I would not speak disparagingly of the African youth. Considering their circumstances, I think they generally do credit to the race to which they belong. We have, in our mission schools, many fine, interesting boys, who, had they enjoyed your advantages from infancy, would perhaps not have fallen very far below any of you in intelligence. I did not suppose, until I came among them, that I could feel that interest in African boys that I now do in those with whom I have become acquainted. I think the chief hope of Africa depends upon the education of its youth, and it is our great hope that the youth of our mission schools will grow up to lead the way among their countrymen in civilization, Christianity, and every thing that is good. Pains are taken to impress it upon their minds that this is our object in educating them; and, indeed, this seems to be generally understood among the people by whom

our mission stations are surrounded. Many of the children regard it as quite a privilege to be placed in the mission schools. Cases are not unfrequent of boys running away from home, and coming a distance of several miles, and asking admission into the schools. In such cases, they are always received and kept until an opportunity is afforded of conferring with their parents and friends, who can generally be induced by a trifling present to permit their children to stay. Some of the finest boys in our schools have been obtained in this way.

"The natives of this part of Africa are a strong, well-formed race of people. Their appearance I think generally superior to that of the coloured race in our own country, although I do not know that you would think so were you to see them in their native dress, which consists only of a piece of cloth about the loins, and hats, when they can get them, although this is an acquisition which comparatively few are able to obtain. When I first arrived, before landing, several of the kroomen came on board dressed in this style. It was rather revolting to me at first, but I soon became

reconciled to it, so that now a native African, dressed in his cloth, appears almost as genteel to me as a man at home dressed in a dandy suit. Some of the more respectable ones wear a large cloth which covers the greater part of the body; and many of the old men wear a red cap, and carry a long staff or pole, which gives them quite a venerable, patriarchal appearance."

This letter was left unfinished, and is, perhaps, the last production of his pen. Soon after he was called to his last sickness and death. His labours were early finished, and his heavenly rest obtained.

CHAPTER XI.

HIS SICKNESS AND DEATH.

After the letters which we have now given, we have nothing further from his own pen. We have followed him now from his childhood to the close of his humble but faithful career. The gracious Saviour, who has led him all his life long with the most tender providence and grace, does not forsake him in his closing trials. The first few weeks of his residence in Africa seemed to furnish the most reasonable and encouraging hope that the climate would prove adapted to his constitution, and his life might be long spared to labour in this interesting missionary field. The extracts from his journal and letters which we have already given are adapted to show how well suited he was to the work before him and how likely to be a permanent and a precious blessing there. But such was not the will of God concerning him. He had been bought

GRAVES OF THE MISSIONARIES, MT. VAUGHAN.—1. Mrs. Savage.—2. Miss Coggshall.—3. Mr. Messinger.—4. Mr. Campbell, Missionary of the Am. B. C. F. M.—5. J. M. Thompson, Colored Teacher.

with a price, and his body and his spirit were not our's, but the Lord's, who had the right to do what he would with his own. Much as we should have delighted in his long and useful life on earth, Jesus more desired him in some other field and scene in his great dominion, not clearly made known to us. He was to depart and be with Christ, which is far better. He had chosen the good part which shall never be taken away from him. The following letter from the Rev. Dr. Savage to the Foreign Committee gave the history of his last earthly hours and his happy departure:—

"Fishtown, *April* 1, 1846.

"By my last dates you were informed of our gratification at the unexpected arrival of the Rev. E. J. P. Messinger. The melancholy duty now devolves upon me of informing you of his sickness and death.

"On the 28th of January he came to Fishtown, at the desire of the mission, to be under my charge while passing through the first stages of his acclimation. Here he remained more than seven weeks, during which time he expressed himself daily as well, with the

occasional exception of an affection of the back, to which he had been subjected several years, and from which he suffered more or less pain and inconvenience. Having not yet seen all the members of our mission, and desiring very much to be present at our regular meeting, to be held at Cavalla on the 26th of March, he left Fishtown on the morning of the 20th for Mount Vaughan, designing to preach the funeral sermon, on Sunday, of a colonist communicant, and on the Wednesday following proceed to Cavalla. He rode on horseback from this to Rocktown, a distance of about six miles, which place he desired to visit, with a view to a decision either for or against it as his future field of labour; thence he went in my boat by sea to Cape Palmas, distant in a straight line about four miles. He was made very sick by the motion of the boat, and (which I regretted to hear) declined the use of the awning and his umbrella. On arriving at Cape Palmas, he complained much of his back, and on that account preferred walking, to riding, most of the way to Mount Vaughan. Soon after he left us, a note arrived from Mr. Payne, informing

me that Mrs. Perkins was ill at Rockbookah. Thinking that Dr. Perkins might be enfeebled by his close attendance on Mrs. Patch during her last sickness, and therefore need my assistance, I started early next morning (Saturday) in my boat for Cavalla, whence I proceeded by land immediately to Rockbookah, where I arrived just after dark the same day. I was greatly relieved to find Mrs. Perkins in a favourable state, though not out of danger, and Dr. Perkins very well. While at family prayers the next morning, a man arrived at Mount Vaughan with a note stating that Mr. Messinger 'was attacked with fever.' Feeling it my duty to go at once, I started immediately after breakfast, and, travelling the whole day in a clear, hot sun, I reached the bedside of our sick brother at dark, having spent the Lord's day as I had never done before on land in Africa. I found nothing alarming in his case; and he continued in about the same state for the following three days, no material change occurring in his symptoms. Great torpor of the system existed from the outset, which in all such cases is decidedly unfavourable. Medicines would

not produce their specific effect. On the seventh day from his attack, a crisis occurred, when the powers of life began to fail. Gradually declining, he expired on the ninth day.

"Mr. Messinger's case is an anomalous one in my experience. It was very clearly a complicated one. What the precise nature of his dorsal affection was primarily, I am not prepared to say. His physician in Philadelphia pronounced it to be lumbago, and therefore it would be no obstacle in his coming to Africa.

"In case it were simply lumbago, I should have given the same opinion. On his arrival at Mount Vaughan, he complained very much of his back, and made known to Mrs. Appleby that, the night before leaving Fishtown, he had slept with his window open; and, a tornado arising, the wind blew directly and strongly upon him the whole night. He seemed to think that, whatever this dorsal affection might be, it would be the main cause of his death, and spoke several times during his sickness of suffering acutely from it. Whether it was primarily lumbago or not, I cannot say; but one

thing was evident,—that the symptoms *then* existing indicated an acute affection within the spinal canal—I should say 'spinal meningitis,' or inflammation in the membranes investing the spinal cord.

"Great restlessness and irritation were attendant throughout, but his mind was clear and active until within the last eighteen or twenty hours, when he became delirious, and expired, as we thought, in that condition.

"It now remains for me to speak of his state of mind under sickness and in view of death. And here I would remark that from the first he manifested a calmness and patience under suffering that seemed to all beautifully illustrative of his piety. His conversation and whole demeanour, in view of the approach of death, were more like those of a man about entering upon a momentous journey rather than his departure for the other world. The following is the substance of my notes, made as the facts transpired :—

"*March* 26, *Thursday*.—A change for the worse has been perceived since two P. M.; his pulse, from that time, has indicated extreme danger and approaching dissolution.

At half-past five P. M., I sat down by his side with a heavy heart, (for now only had my hopes begun to fail,) and asked if his spiritual comfort was affected by his illness. He replied that his feelings in this respect were peculiarly pleasant, though he did not know but that it was owing, in some measure, to the excitement of medicine. He remarked that he had been in a cold, lifeless state, owing, probably, to a protracted, unpleasant voyage, which sometimes almost led him to doubt whether he had any interest in Christ. I then repeated, 'Look unto *me*, and be ye saved.' He immediately replied, 'Oh yes, I have often thought upon that text, and it has brought comfort to my soul. I think I can say that if I am taken away I shall be with Christ. I rely only upon him. He is my support.' This he said with marked fervour, and then added, 'but I suppose I ought not to talk much.'

"*Friday morning, half-past four.*—He remarked that he felt a sinking internally that told him that he could not rally, and asked my opinion of his state and prospects. I replied that great uncertainty attended the diseases of this country; that I had

seen persons apparently sicker than he was recover, but still that I had felt for two days past that there was increasing danger in his case—an obstinacy of symptoms existing for which I could not account, and medicines failing to produce their usual effect. He seemed to study my countenance as I spoke, and replied, apparently with great composure, '*Well, I have no desire on the subject, but leave it in God's hands to live or die. I thought that in coming to Africa I was in the path of duty, and that I could be happy in no other field of labour. My mind is still unchanged, and should I now be taken away, can see no reason for regretting that I came. My feelings in view of death are those of happiness, and the only regret I can have is the discouraging effect it may have on others.*' I then remarked, that as the result could not be foreseen, if he had any requests to leave in the event of death, he would do well to do it at an early period. He then desired to be affectionately remembered to certain individuals, giving their names and residence; then to the children of the Sabbath-school of the Church of the Epiphany in Philadelphia, to the ladies of the Sewing

Society of the same church, and to the members of the Foreign Committee. To the children of the Sunday-school of the Epiphany he sent an especial message:—'Tell them *all* to prepare to meet me in heaven; *some* I hope to meet, but tell them I want to meet them *all* in that happy place.' In a conversation that subsequently took place, I said, 'From your remark that the only regret you can have, in the case of your death, is the discouraging effect it may exert upon others, I infer that it is your opinion the mission should still be energetically sustained.' 'Oh, yes,' was the quick reply, and there was a fervour in the language of the dying man that gave to the sentiment in my mind the solemnity and importance of eternity. I confess that when one and another of our number falls or withdraws, there is a possibility, if not probability, that our labours will result in failure; only, however, '*through its discouraging effect upon others.*' Conceive, then, if you can, what encouragement and strength such declarations bring home to our hearts. 'Oh, yes,' he continued; 'a great work has already been done, and a greater still is *to*

be done. I have looked upon it as by far the most interesting mission before the church, and now second only to China. Yes, *it ought to be sustained;* but where are the men to come from?' 'From God,' was my only reply. 'Yes, from God. The Lord,' continued he, 'will raise them up when it is time to do it.'

"At another time, as I administered some sangaree, he remarked, 'Oh, what will all these drinks be when I come to taste the pure water of life!'

"On Friday afternoon he entertained the idea that he should rally and recover, but before night he gave up all such hope. At half-past six he exclaimed, 'Oh for grace for a dying hour!' I then repeated some texts, such as, 'Ask, and ye shall receive,' 'Look unto *me* and be ye saved,' 'As thy day is, so shall thy strength be,' &c. He replied, 'Tell the children of your school that *that* is my message to them:—"Look unto me, and be ye saved." I have told them that again and again, and *now* I find it my only support. Give my love to Mrs. Savage, and tell her to persevere in faith and her reward will come hereafter.' I continued to repeat

such passages from God's word as I thought appropriate, to which he added, with fervour, 'And casting all thy care upon the Lord, for he careth for thee.'

"At another time, with his arms extended upon the bed, and looking upward, he said, 'Ah! here I lie—a poor, weak, unprofitable servant, weak in body and mind!' I asked, 'Can you not lean upon the arm of the Lord—an everlasting arm *now* extended for you?' He quickly answered, 'Oh, yes, I do lean upon it;' and then, after a short pause, 'I cast all my care upon the Lord, for he careth for me.' Again, 'Oh, it is a comforting thought that I shall leave all my sins behind!'

"I read at intervals selected passages from the eighth chapter of Romans. When I came to the 38th and 39th verses—'For I am persuaded that neither life nor death,' &c. 'shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord,'—he responded, fervently and impressively, 'Amen.' After some moments of apparent meditation and prayer, he turned to me with a sweet expression of countenance, and said, 'Read to me some more

of the precious promises.' I then read selections from the 14th chapter of St. John, and the 27th Psalm, in which he seemed to take delight.

"Again, after repeating the 25th and 26th verses of the 11th chapter of St. John's gospel—'I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live, and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die,'—I said, '*Believest thou this?*' He replied, with great solemnity, 'I believe; Lord, help thou my unbelief! At another time he said, 'I know that Jesus Christ died for me, and on this I rely.'

"Throughout Friday he was very free in conversation, and highly edifying. To Mrs. Appleby, who showed in many ways the kindness and unwearied sympathy of a Christian woman, as she endeavoured to restrain him from too much talking, he said, 'I feel that I *must* talk; my time is short, and I must spend it for Christ; we ought to do all we can to glorify him who has done so much for us.' Much more was said; but surely this was enough for all who knew him, to show that he died glorying in the cross.

"I can bear full testimony to his Christian character while he was a member of my family. In all his intercourse with us and the native population around us, he shed the sweet fragrance of a life wholly given to God. All in our household and our schools loved him; and I do not believe there is an eye among us that has not paid its sincere tribute to his cherished memory. Sobs were heard, and tears flowed, while, with the assembled schools on the morning after his burial, (Sunday,) I delivered his dying message:—'Look unto me, and be ye saved. I have told them this again and again; and *now* I find it *my* support.' It was a truly impressive occasion. But one short week before, and he whose dying words I was then delivering stood in that very place, apparently in perfect health, entreating that very auditory to flee to Christ and be saved. His past exhortations and instructions came up to the mind with effect; and I cannot doubt that the blessing of God will follow his brief labours among us. The impression he made upon the native population around us may, in some degree, be apprehended from the fact that, on my return from Mount

Vaughan, the old chief and his most influential head men waited upon me, and expressed 'their sympathy at the loss of my brother;' and others of subordinate rank did the same, all, as one, saying, 'Ah! that was a good man.' If Mr. Messinger gained their good opinion, it was done by his Christian demeanour and intercourse, and not in the uncertain, usual, and almost universal way—by presents; for this system, as such, I am happy to say, he disapproved. Such was his manner and intercourse with them that they could but accord to his memory the tribute so justly due:—'he was a good man;' and, I would add, had he lived, he would have, no doubt, proved an eminently useful man. Such are the men we need,—*not only good men*, but men of such habits, tact, and other qualifications, that will render them *eminently useful.* It is not every good man that will prove so. It follows that our loss in the death of Mr. Messinger is great. But, afflictive and dark as the dispensation is, we 'sorrow not as those without hope—hope in respect to the departed, for we feel assured that our great loss is his greater gain; and hope in respect

to the mission, its continuance, proper support, and contemplated results. In all these respects, our hopes are strengthened in the death of our departed brother. If to come and give his testimony in favour of the great principles of the gospel, thereby confirming what we have so often preached before to the heathen, and encouraging us to believe on, hope on, and labour on, assuring us '*that a great work has been done*, and a greater still *is to be done*,'—sealing his sincerity and the truth of his words by his death, uttering all, as he stood upon the confines of the two worlds, *eternity opening before him*,—if this be all that it was designed in the councils of the triune God that he should do in coming to us, surely *he came not in vain.*

"The full influence of his *coming and dying* upon the cause of Christ will be known only in the courts of heaven; and here we would bow in reverence and solemn submission, and say, 'Thy will, O God, be done!' But what it *ought to have* is better known to the committee and the church; and here can we not hang upon the promise that 'all things shall work together for good to them that are good'?—a promise *not without meaning.*

This we do know,—in his life he spake to the Lord and his church in a *voice that was heard*, 'Here am I; *send me.*' *He was sent.* And, in his death, was it not the same voice, strong in faith, echoing the last words of the lamented Minor?—words now chiselled upon his tomb, and words—may God grant they may be written in fire upon ten thousand hearts!—'Let the mission go forward; let it go forward more than ever.'

"It remains to be seen whether the lamented Messinger had one reason, in fact, to regret, in his death, that he came to Africa. Will his early death have a discouraging effect upon others looking forward to this field of labour? Is it a legitimate field for missionary effort? Where is the spot on the wide globe, having a body with an immortal spirit, that is not? Where in God's word can be found an exception to the last command of the ascended Saviour, 'Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature'? Africa—heathen, degraded, brutal Africa, though her climate is pestiferous, and, in its effects, will prove to be, sooner or later, prejudicial to human life—*is not an exception.* That it is an unhealthy climate

no one will deny. From this unhealthiness no class or colour finds an immunity—not even the adult native himself. Though there is a difference in degrees, all bear testimony to the truth of the assertion that, as all breathe the same atmosphere, all are more or less liable to its deleterious influences,—missionary, colonist, and native. The worst was foreseen by the great head of the church when that command was given to which no exception can be found. And, had he excluded *the millions of Africa*, where would have been the *freeness* of his grace, the *glory of his salvation?* No; Africa is to be redeemed. But 'how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard?' and 'how shall they hear without a preacher?'—and 'how shall they preach, *except they be sent?*'"

To this painfully-interesting letter from Dr. Savage I may add the following beautiful remarks from the sister of Mr. Messinger, to whom I am indebted for much aid in the preparation of this memoir of a brother she so much loved:—

"Thus closed his toil on earth,—thus commenced his reward in heaven. We love to

recall his gentle, unassuming manner, his meek and quiet spirit, his active and beautiful piety, while tabernacled with us here below; nor do we check tears that start unbidden, for 'Jesus wept' at the tomb of Lazarus, and surely he will permit his frail and feeble children to weep when called to consign kindred dust to dust. Still in the midst of tears we would look up to our Father, and say, with glad submission, 'Not my will, but thine, be done.'

"To speak further of his virtues would be superfluous—perhaps in me unbecoming. He lives in the hearts of his friends, and his name is enrolled among the blood-bought company who are singing praise to the Lamb, and whither we are fast tending to unite our voices in their glorious, exalted strains.

"To the friends of our departed brother, the writer tenders her warmest thanks for their kindness to the cherished one whose death made the first breach in the happy circle of brothers and sisters to which she belongs; and she feels assured that the God of the widow, the God of the fatherless, the God of the church, and the God of missions, will give them an abundant reward.

And can it be, beloved, that thou art number'd with the dead?
That a distant soil—a lowly sod—is pillowing thy head?
The music of thy gentle voice, oh who could hear unmoved?
And now that voice is hushed in death,—my brother—my beloved.

Oh, could I but have watch'd by thee,—have heard thy parting breath,—
Methinks I could have yielded thee e'en cheerful up to death;
Yet why should I complain,—though e'en to strangers it was given
To lay thy body in the tomb?—Farewell! we meet in heaven!"

We subjoin the following testimonials to the worth of the departed from those who knew and loved him in life, and who "sorrow with rejoicing" over his early tomb:—

(From the *Episcopal Recorder.*)

"It is, to our limited capacities and short-sighted judgments, one of the darkest mysteries of Providence that those who are, in the view of their fellow-men, most eminently qualified to do good,—those who are, by their example, 'burning and shining lights,'—should so frequently be called away just in the *midst*, or, indeed, at the *commencement*, of their bright career! An instance of this has lately occurred (as is generally known to the readers of the Recorder) in

the sudden and unexpected death of the late Rev. E. J. P. Messinger, one of the missionaries of our church to Africa. All who have, for the last ten years, been in any measure connected with him, will be willing, I am sure, to unite with the writer of this brief sketch in bearing testimony to the worth and excellency of his Christian character and his Christian usefulness, particularly in that congregation where some who read these lines had the privilege of being associated with him. As the teacher of the infant class there, 'he was most earnest and engaged, and, I may add, *successful* too, in training the lambs of the flock to follow the footsteps of their divine Shepherd. Many persons think that little children cannot be made to comprehend the doctrinal truths of the Scriptures. This was not the opinion of the subject of this sketch. In presenting his periodical report to his pastor, a few years since, (when engaged in teaching,) he remarked, '*I can hardly think there are any, unless perhaps some of the very little ones, who do not understand that they are sinners, and need a change of heart,—that there is no way to be saved but through the blood of*

Christ.' Again: '*It is my constant endeavour to hold up these truths to their minds.*'

"How these precious doctrines were exemplified in his daily walk, all who knew him will testify. But why dwell on the past? He has gone! He is not! 'God has taken him!' How precious, then, in this connection, is the doctrine of the 'Communion of Saints'! Time was, when many of us were privileged to kneel at a common table, and partake of the sacramental privileges of God's house, with this servant of the Lord. Then he was, as we are now, but in the vestibule of this spiritual building; now he has entered into that rest which God has prepared for them that love him. Since that period many changes have taken place. The beloved pastor, who then broke to us the bread of life, and around whom our hearts clung with fond affection, has, in the providence of God, been removed to another field. Several of our teachers have gone to their final rest; one has entered the sacred ministry; but among them all there is not one to be found, living or dead, who possessed a purer and more self-denying

spirit than that which animated the breast of Erasmus J. P. Messinger.

"A FELLOW-LABOURER."

"We insert," (continues the same paper,) "with much pleasure, the following tribute to Mr. Messinger's character, from one who is not accustomed to apply 'flattering titles' either to the living or dead:—

"Having known him while at the Theological Seminary of Virginia, I can speak with confidence respecting him, and know that I shall not be accused of speaking too highly by those who there and elsewhere remember him as well. It is rare that we meet with one of such uniform and deep piety. A transitory zeal and impulsive love we often see; but such was not his character. He was most even and consistent in his temper and disposition. I have rarely known a person of such uniform cheerfulness. He seemed always the same. He loved the retirement of his room, and yet was no misanthrope or ascetic. He mingled but little with the brethren, unless when engaged in his work of doing good; yet he always met them with a cheerful, smiling

countenance. The poor in the vicinity of the seminary will long remember his kindly visits to their houses. For some time, in company with another brother student, now a missionary in China, he visited the Almshouse in Alexandria every Sunday afternoon, to impart spiritual instruction to the inmates. I have had the pleasure of joining with him in some of these visits, and have felt myself better from the intercourse. He would go from room to room, visit the sick and infirm, conversing and praying with them, and lighting up their countenances with the reflection of his own Christian cheerfulness. He was most happy in his addresses to the young. For many years he laboured in the Sunday-school of the Epiphany in Philadelphia, where his services will long be remembered; and while at the seminary he was called upon to address the Sunday-schools in the neighbouring towns. There was something in his manner that always engaged the attention of the scholars. A parent, whose children attended a school which Mr. Messinger addressed, once remarked to me that his children would come home and repeat

something which he had said, when they would rarely remember any thing from other speakers in the school.

"He was noted for his scrupulous punctuality in the performance of every duty, and for his tenderness of conscience. He had desired to enter on the missionary work before he completed his studies, but was prevented by the advice of his friends.

"From such a character, thus endowed with every thing that seemed to promise usefulness, we had expected great things. When such a one is taken away, so faithful, so heartily devoted to his Master's work, and others left, mere cumberers of the ground, we are led to wonder at the dispensations of Providence. Truly,

> God works in a mysterious way
> His counsels to perform.

But faith should point us to that other world where all these things will be known. Let us be consoled with the promise of the Saviour:—'What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter.' God is able to dispense with our poor services and carry on the work without us, or to do much more

with our death than we think to do with our lives. Let us not murmur, or charge Him foolishly, but bow in the deepest humility at the dispensations of Providence, and use them all as incentives to greater zeal and devotion, knowing that we all have but a short time to work,—that soon all that we can do will be finished, and we shall be at rest."

In the Pastoral Report of the Church of the Epiphany for 1847, particular reference is made to Mr. Messinger's death and character. After alluding to the painful facts in his history as already given, the report says:—

"It is common to hear among the poor of this congregation this remark, that they 'loved the ground on which he trod.' There are communicants in our church who trace their first religious impressions to the faithful and affectionate visits of the beloved teacher of their little ones.

"By permission of the vestry, it is proposed to erect a suitable monument* to the

* In February, 1856, the teachers of the Sunday-school of the Church of the Epiphany forwarded a suitable monument to Africa to designate the resting-place of Mr. Messinger's remains.

deceased within the church. We know not that a better lesson can be derived from the life and death of our former beloved colleague than to call to mind his eager use of every opportunity of usefulness which offered itself while in a course of preparation as a missionary to a heathen land. His life would have been in a measure fruitless, had he spent it in a state of idle hope or reverie until he reached that distant shore. But, by doing 'with his might what his hands found to do,' he, 'being dead, yet speaketh.' Let us, fellow-teachers, look at this example of our beloved forerunner into the presence and rest of Christ, and 'go and do likewise.' "

The following lines were received from the sister of Mr. Messinger, before referred to:—

Brother, thou art gone to rest;
We will not weep for thee,
For thou art now where oft on earth
Thy spirit long'd to be.

Brother, thou art gone to rest;
Thine is an early tomb;
But Jesus summon'd thee away,
Thy Saviour called thee home.

Brother, thou art gone to rest;
Thy toils and cares are o'er;
And sorrow, sin, and suffering, now
Shall ne'er distress thee more.

Brother, thou art gone to rest;
Thy sins are all forgiven;
And saints in light have welcom'd thee
To share the joys of heaven.

Brother, thou art gone to rest;
And this shall be our prayer,
That when we reach our journey's end
Thy glory we may share.

Thus this excellent man departed, on the 28th of March, 1846, at the age of thirty-four years and nine months. It is a pleasure to remember his whole course of Christian fidelity and excellence. It has been a pleasure, amid the pressure of multiplied cares and labours, to finish this record of his humble, holy life, and to give to others the opportunity to know how usefully and happily he fulfilled his work and honoured the name and the cause of his glorious Master and Lord.

THE END.

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